



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Teacher Education Mentor Handbook

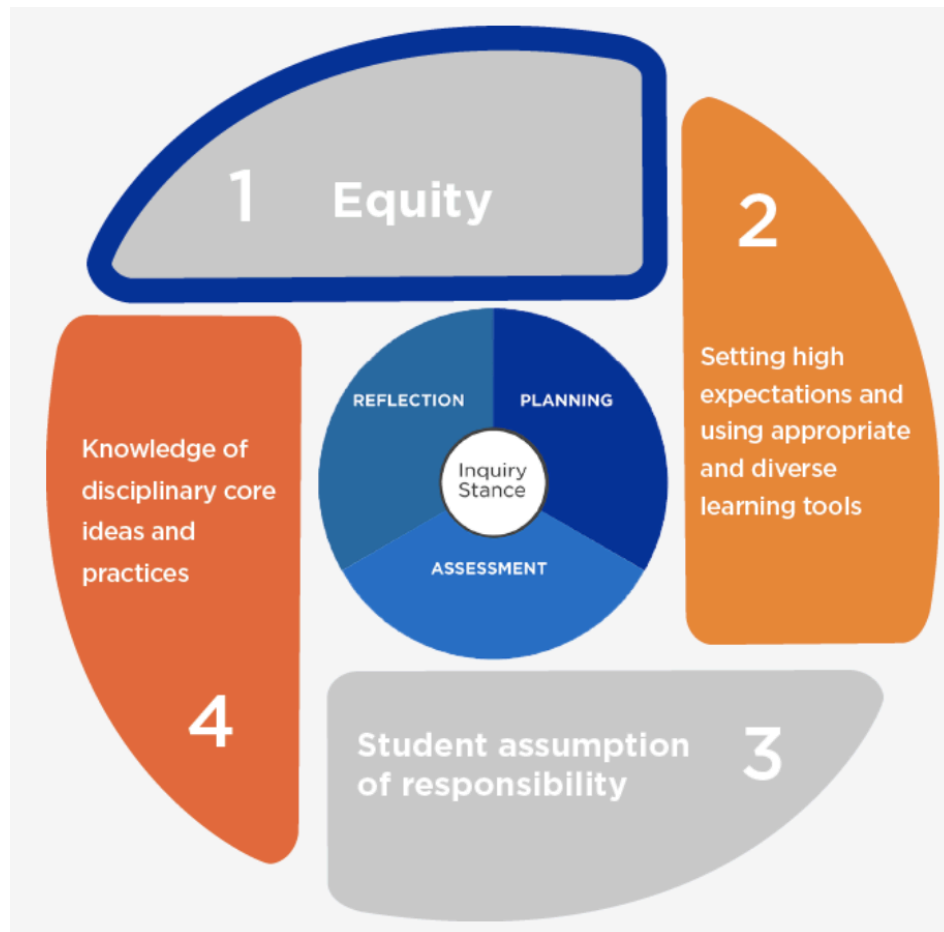


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Welcome to being a mentor!

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is a Pre-K-12 teacher who accepts the responsibility to help prepare Boise State students in Pre-K-12 settings to become certificated teachers. A mentor serves as a trusted advisor and teacher. As a mentor you will advise the Boise State student in your classroom in their apprenticeship into the teaching profession. This is an awesome task, one from which both parties in the relationship benefit. [This video provides an Introduction to Mentoring.](#)

Check out this brief [two-pager of BSU mentor teacher expectations.](#)

MENTOR TEACHER RESOURCES

DEFINITIONS:

Liaison: A university faculty member who is not only a supervisor but also accepts the responsibility to develop an extensive, collaborative partnership with a particular educational institution, to coordinate the activities between the mentor(s) and the candidate(s) and to assess the candidate based upon the Idaho Professional Teacher Standards and the Danielson (2013) *Framework for Teaching*.

Candidate: A university student who has been accepted into a Boise State teacher education program.

Professional Year: The two semesters in which candidates spend a major portion of their time in a Pre-K-12 setting. This includes the internship and student teaching semesters.

Intern: A teacher candidate who works in a Pre-K-12 educational institution prior to the student teaching semester as a part of their preparation to become a certified teacher. This candidate works in the partner school approximately one to four days a week, depending on the program. Candidates are also enrolled in university coursework. They should be approximating practice, leading small-group and whole-group lessons and co-planning and teaching with mentor feedback and guidance.

Student Teacher: A candidate who is in the final semester of their program. This candidate is at the partner school full time, M-F. During the student teaching semester, the candidate is expected to ease into the teaching role, eventually taking over, full time in the classroom, for 6-10 weeks. Student teachers complete a Standard Performance Assessment where they plan and implement instruction and conduct analyses of student work in order to gain insights into the complexity of teaching and responding to student needs in real time.

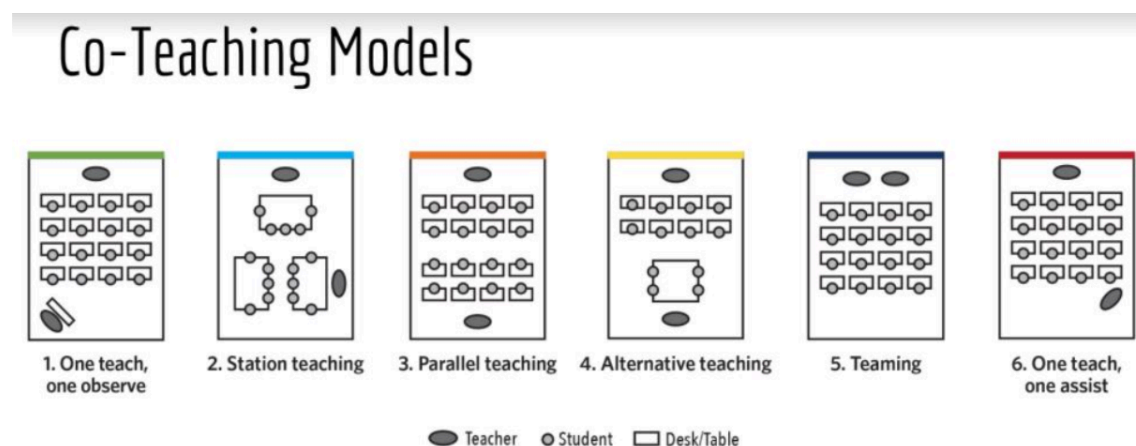
***Elementary candidates split their time between two classrooms (primary and intermediate classrooms), switching at the quarter or at mid-year. If students have a middle level endorsement, they will need a content area placement to fulfill their endorsement requirements.**

Danielson Framework for Teaching: A framework for quality teaching and the assessment model adopted by the state of Idaho. All teacher candidates in the state are assessed via a common summative assessment (see Field Guide).

Co-Teaching Model: A model where two professionals share space and work collaboratively to best meet Pre-K-12 student needs while both grow and develop in their professional practice.

WHAT is Co-Teaching?

Unlike traditional models of student teaching, those involving mentors require a different vision of teacher candidates in the classroom. Instead of the student intern/teacher stepping into the classroom while the teacher leaves, mentors maintain a visible role for the duration of the student intern/teacher's experience. Co-teaching is two teachers working together with groups of students and sharing the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction and physical space (St. Cloud State University, 2003). Co-teaching includes **Team Teaching, Parallel teaching** and **Alternative** or **Supplemental teaching**.



Team Teaching: The rationale behind this practice is that it provides an opportunity for the teacher candidate to learn and become adept at the use of instructional routines and practices a mentor may use. This approach should be employed during the first semester of the Professional Year and in any/all of the classroom placements. In this approach, mentors and teacher candidates share in the planning process with mentors taking the “lead” to demonstrate how plans are determined, tasks are selected, groups are formed, etc. Mentors and candidates teach the same thing at the same time; there should be opportunities for the candidate to observe instructional practices used and how they are implemented, and there should be opportunities for the candidate to attempt to implement a variety of instructional strategies. Again, this is a time of apprenticeship into routine, practice of instructional strategies and techniques, and observation so that candidates will be able to assume these activities more independently during their student teaching semester.

Parallel Teaching: Parallel teaching is when the class is split and educators instruct different groups. Examples of Parallel Teaching include:

- “one teach, one observe” where one teacher teaches while the other collects purposeful data.
- “one teach, one assist” where one teacher provides assistance to individual students.
- “station teaching” where educators teach in different small groups.

Alternative or Supplemental Teaching: Alternative teaching is when one teacher works with students while other teachers work with those who need a different pace or approach. Supplemental teaching includes “alternative/differentiated teaching” where a small number of students are selected for intense instruction by one educator and “team teaching” where both educators instruct the class together.

Alternative teaching can be effective for differentiating instruction: The arrangement of classrooms should be such that the needs of Pre-K-12 students requiring additional support are being best met. This potentially means that those individuals within the classroom requiring the most support are receiving intervention (tier 2) instruction from the mentor in a small group or individually, while candidates assume responsibility for teaching the majority of the class (i.e., mentors provide the intervention for Pre-K-12 students in most need).

EXPECTATIONS OF A MENTOR

In addition to acting as a resource for planning and lesson ideas, a guide for classroom management and routines, and a general sounding board, as a mentor you have five (5) major responsibilities:

1. **Creating Space and Opportunities:** Support candidates’ thinking about the learners, classroom environment, instruction, etc. Provide space and autonomy for candidates to design and implement lessons. Encourage candidates to have a growth mindset and take risks, providing a safe space for students to make mistakes, reflect, and adapt instruction.
2. **Creating a Dialogue.** Perhaps the easiest and most efficient way to do this is through the use of dialogue journals (i.e., physical or digital written communication). Candidates will be encouraged to create such with each mentor teacher. It is recommended that candidates and mentor teachers correspond in the journal 2-3 times per week. Candidates and mentors can use this to communicate about students, lessons observed, questions and other needs. Consistent verbal and written feedback are encouraged at regular intervals.
3. **Observation of Instruction.** Each week mentors should observe candidates at least once in each of the content areas for which they have assumed some responsibilities (i.e., initially this may be only one content area but will progress to include all endorsement areas) and provide informal feedback. Twice each semester, the liaison and mentor teacher will take part in a formative observation of candidate instruction based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
4. **Professional Year Assessment.** Mentors will be asked to complete, either online or in hard copy, an evaluation of the candidate according to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Candidates will be asked to self-assess using the same forms, and mentors will be asked to share and discuss these with candidates.
5. **Midterm and Final Conferences.** Mentors and liaisons will engage in both a midterm and a final conference each semester in which they will discuss the Professional Year Assessment and help students set goals using the Individualized Professional Learning Plan (IPLP).

Additionally, liaisons will visit schools approximately twice a month to provide support to both mentors and candidates. Feel free to contact your liaison at any time via email or phone. They are there to support you.

If you have questions or concerns about the program please contact the Assistant Dean of Teacher Education, Dr. Sherry Dismuke at cheryledismuke@boisestate.edu.

A calendar of activities and meetings for candidates is developed for each semester. This calendar should serve as a guide for what mentors may choose to have candidates do in the classroom.

Candidates will attend monthly seminars (typically the first Friday of the month). The planning and purposes of the seminars are very intentional, and the seminars have been specifically created to support candidate development and success. First semester seminars will focus on developing an inquiry habit of mind and engage students in analyzing their context, learners, and curricular materials and developing their professional identity. Second semester seminars will focus on supporting students with their Student Teaching requirements, including their SPAT Unit development, SPAT Reflection, and Assessment Analysis. During the student teaching seminars, students will also engage in career development opportunities. Candidates are required to attend these seminars, as they are essential to candidate success at BSU. Candidates are excused from their placements on these days. Mentor teachers, please encourage your candidates to fully engage in these seminars to have the most meaningful experience possible. Please reach out to your liaison or Dr. Sherry Dismuke if you have questions about the seminars.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Boise State University's conceptual framework, "The Professional Educator," establishes a shared vision in preparing educators to work effectively in Pre-K-12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service and accountability.

The Professional Educator

Boise State University strives to develop knowledgeable educators who integrate complex roles and dispositions in the service of diverse communities of learners. Believing that all children, adolescents, and adults can learn, educators dedicate themselves to supporting that learning. Using effective approaches that promote high levels of student achievement, educators create environments that prepare learners to be citizens who contribute to a complex world. Educators serve learners as reflective practitioners, scholars and artists, problem solvers and partners.

Idaho Core Teaching Standards

The foundation of Boise State Teacher Education programs is Idaho's Core Teacher Standards that describe the expectations for initial preparation of teachers and are based on national standards for the preparation of teachers. We adhere to these standards in the design and delivery of teacher education programs that will prepare highly effective teachers.

The assessment of student performance and program effectiveness is based on The Idaho Core Teacher Standards and their associated indicators of accomplishment. The "Idaho Core Teacher Standards" apply to **ALL** teacher certification areas. These are the 10 basic standards all teachers must know and be able to do, regardless of their specific content areas.

Standard Performance Assessment of Teaching (SPAT) for Student Teachers

During the Student Teaching semester, students will complete the Standard Performance Assessment of Teaching (SPAT), which serves as a final assessment for graduation and teacher certification. The SPAT has three components: 1) Unit Plan, 2) Reflective Journal, and 3) Assessment Analysis. The goal of each of these assignments is to gather evidence of proficiency of the Idaho Core Teaching Standards as required by the State of Idaho. Further, each of these assignments is intended to support students' deep and intentional thinking about their learners, instruction, and teaching so that the practices become internalized to support transfer to their future teaching contexts. The SPAT Unit should be 2-3 weeks in length, and candidates need the opportunity to plan independently with your support as a thinking partner.

EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHER CANDIDATES

INTERNS

Interns are required to work one to four days a week in schools. **Interns will follow Boise State's Fall and Spring Break.** Interns will complete all university requirements and should have a wide range of experiences. These should include:

- Teaching lessons in small and large group settings
- Observations
- One-on-one instruction
- Attending parent meetings
- Attending faculty, administrative team, and other meetings
- Planning daily activities
- Communicating with parents, students, and other faculty members
- SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS (see *Field Guide*):
 - Expectations Continuum (Appendix A, Mentor completes also)
 - Four Observation Cycles (Appendix B, Mentor Involved)
 - Video and Video Reflection (Appendix C)
 - Professional Year Assessment (Appendix E, Mentor Involved TWICE per semester, at midterm and semester's end)
 - Individual Professional Learning Plan (Appendix F, Candidates will need guidance at the end of the year)

STUDENT TEACHERS

Student Teachers are required to work full time, five days a week, in schools. **Student Teachers will follow their school district's Fall and Spring Break.** Along with regular classroom teaching expectations **and those listed above**, those requirements include:

- Attendance at workshops, inservices, and professional development
- Preparation for and participation in Parent Teacher Conferences
- Observations of other classes/schools
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS (as per the *Field Guide*):

- Expectations Continuum (Appendix A, Mentor Involved)
- Four Observation Cycles (Appendix B, Mentor Involved)
- Video and Video Reflection (Appendix C)
- Equity Case Study (Appendix D)
- SPAT
- Professional Year Assessment (Appendix E, Mentor Involved TWICE per semester, at midterm and semester's end)
- Individual Professional Learning Plan (Appendix F, Candidates will need guidance TWICE per semester)

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR INTERNS AND STUDENT TEACHERS

(This list is suggestive, not exhaustive, nor required.)

Week	Interns – possible activities (Elementary–3-4 days a week) (Secondary–2 days a week)	Student Teachers – possible activities (5 days a week)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get to know students and begin building relationships ● Support instruction by circulating, and working with individuals or small groups. ● Take students to and from specials, lunch, and recess. ● Give assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assume responsibility for a routine part of the day such as calendar, read-aloud or morning message. ● Write and distribute a letter of introduction to parents. ● Make necessary plans (e.g. consent, the technology needed, dates) early for the video recording of two lessons.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assume a routine part of the day such as a calendar, read-aloud, or morning message. ● Serve as instructional support for the remainder of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin co-planning and assume responsibility for teaching, differentiating, and assessing one or more content areas.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin teaching in a content area from the teacher's lesson plans. ● Support instruction by leading small group work or individual interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue co-planning and phasing-in by assuming responsibility for an additional content area each week. ● Determine unit plan topic and scope.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in co-planning for all areas and begin teaching for one content area. 	
5	<p>Depending on the competence demonstrated by the teacher candidate, mentor teachers may opt to assign some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching math or ELA from the teacher's lesson plans. ● Assuming responsibility for a second content area. ● Attending RTI or MDT meetings and participating in the delivery of interventions and/or monitoring progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead teaching: planning for instruction, differentiation, and assessment. ● Delegate small group work or individual interventions to mentor teacher and/or support teachers. ● Teach unit plan. ● Assess and analyze formative assessment regularly. ● Engage in regular, reflective dialogue. ● Attend RTI and MDT meetings as appropriate.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day(s) of teaching, then reflecting on the experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in communication with families.
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day(s) of planning, teaching, and assessing. • Participation in communication with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return one area of instruction and planning to mentor teacher (suggestion: ELA or Math)
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin returning lead instruction to mentor teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue gradual phase-out from the lead teacher role.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to phase out 	
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposefully choose and visit other classrooms to observe, participate, and otherwise learn from another educator and group of students. • Handwrite and deliver thank you cards to those who supported you through your semester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out and visit other classrooms chosen purposefully for alignment to goals of the candidate's IPLP. • Handwrite and deliver thank you cards to those who supported you through the program.

**Thanks for agreeing to be
a mentor teacher!**