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LEHMAN URBAN TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION · LEHMAN COLLEGE, CUNY

Cooperating Teacher Handbook

A guide to mentoring, feedback, and compliance requirements for hosting a Lehman College Student Teacher in your classroom.



2026–2027 Academic Year
lehman.edu/education

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01

SECTION ONE



Welcome, Cooperating Teacher

01 · WELCOME, COOPERATING TEACHER

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

Thank you for welcoming a Lehman College Student Teacher into your classroom! Student teaching succeeds through a nurturing, mentoring relationship, and your professional expertise will help a pre-service teacher deepen their understanding of teaching and learning.

Throughout the placement, you'll offer your Student Teacher independent teaching time and co-teaching opportunities, and provide invaluable feedback at the midpoint and endpoint. A Lehman College faculty supervisor will observe and consult with you both. This handbook covers our philosophy, policies, and procedures, plus guidelines for weekly activities.

As a Cooperating Teacher, you may apply for a tuition waiver of up to 3 credits at any CUNY institution, valid for one year from issue (see Appendix F). We can't thank you enough for partnering with Lehman's teacher education programs — please reach out to my team at clinical.practice@lehman.cuny.edu with questions.

Best Regards,

Iain M. Coggins, Ph.D.

Interim Director, Clinical Practice & Partnerships

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⚠ ATTENTION! ACTION REQUIRED — COMPLETE BY SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Required Clinical Supervision Training

NYCPS requires all Cooperating Teachers to complete *Professional Learning for School-Based Teacher Educators in the Provision of Effective Clinical Supervision* — a three-hour asynchronous course on the Pro-Learner platform that issues a CTLE certificate on completion. Please finish by **September 10, 2026** and send your certificate to clinical.practice@lehman.cuny.edu.

Access instructions: [Completing the NYCPS Cooperating Teacher Course](#). The course requires NYCPS login credentials; if you don't have them, contact us and we'll share the public course materials.

02

SECTION TWO



Part I: The Mentoring Relationship

Cooperating Teacher webpage: lehman.edu/academics/education/cpp/cooperating-mentor-teachers

02 · THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher

Research tells us what many educators already know from experience: the single most important person in a Student Teacher's journey is the Cooperating Teacher.

You're the one who opens your classroom door, steadies the room, and creates the setting for effective teaching and learning. What makes this experience meaningful grows from the relationship you build with your Student Teacher, a relationship shaped by mentoring, modeling, and effective feedback. In taking on this role, you are actively preparing the next generation of educators who will serve in urban classrooms like your own.

Responsibilities:

- **Welcome and orient** — introduce your Student Teacher to the school, the community, and their own workspace
- **Model your practice** — think out loud, so your decision-making becomes visible and learnable
- **Give ongoing, effective feedback** — regularly, honestly, and in conversation with the College Supervisor
- **Stay connected** — with the College Supervisor throughout the placement
- **Document formally** — complete and submit feedback and time documentation

The sections below walk through each of these in more depth.

Induction

Every new teacher remembers what it felt like to walk into someone else's classroom for the first time. As the Cooperating Teacher, you play a critical role in easing that transition — helping your Student Teacher step into the profession with confidence. From the moment you first meet, you are helping them establish their professionalism in the classroom, school, and wider community.

Specifically, you will:

- Welcome and introduce them to faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as parents, service providers and others in the community.
- Provide them a dedicated workspace within the classroom. (See the co-teaching strategies in Appendix A and the sample welcome activities checklist in Appendix B.)
- Introduce and guide them through school policies and procedures including collaborative services available to students with and without documented learning disabilities in your class.
- Assist them with engaging the life of the building, district-level meetings, committee work, extra-curricular activities, and special events.
- Encourage them to ask questions, experiment with new strategies, and reflect with them about what did and did not work and why.
- Facilitate their visiting classrooms of teachers working with different student populations, subjects, or grade levels, as well as those using innovative approaches.
- Encourage them to keep an organized record of what they observe that you can review together.
- Provide guidance, feedback and approval of their lesson plans.
- Provide consistent and frequent encouragement, critique, and recognition of their work.
- Direct them to professional resources — articles, journals, books, podcasts, videos, etc. — that can deepen their thinking and practice.

Modeling

As a Cooperating Teacher, you model something no textbook can teach: what it actually looks like to weave content knowledge and professional skill into the daily life of a classroom. From instructional choices and classroom management to the relationships and culture you build with students through routines, transitions, time management, and record-keeping, you will show them what makes a successful day of teaching. Critically, you model what it means to think like a teacher. By making your own reasoning visible and talking through your decisions with your Student Teacher, you help them develop their own toolkit — what will become the strategies and judgement criteria upon which they'll rely in the years to come.

In this spirit, you will:

- Model a range of teaching and classroom management strategies suited to culturally and linguistically diverse students, with and without documented disabilities.
- Help them see how building relationships with parents, families, and service providers matters.
- Model intentional and pedagogically effective use of instructional technology, media, and digital resources including artificial intelligence per applicable policy and guidelines.
- Spend time “thinking with” your Student Teacher — talking through what’s about to happen in the classroom, what just happened, why instruction went in a particular direction, and what comes next. One useful starting point is a short protocol adapted from the “one teach/one observe” co-teaching model — the observation template is in Appendix D.

Effective Feedback

Part of your role as Cooperating Teacher is helping your Student Teacher take stock of how far they've come. The goal of this ongoing assessment isn't just to measure performance — it's to help them grow, and to nurture their own habit of honest self-reflection. Feedback works best when it's timely and consistent, naming clearly what worked, what didn't, and why. It should grow out of a shared conversation grounded in your Student Teacher's knowledge, skills, dispositions, and areas still developing. You might deliver this feedback in writing or in conversation — what matters most is that it happens.

To that end, you'll:

- Share feedback on their performance regularly, in the moment and over time.
- Stay in communication with the College Supervisor — meeting together with your Student Teacher when useful or simply checking in between school visits.
- Complete and return a Cooperating Teacher Feedback Form to the College Supervisor after talking through the assessment with your Student Teacher. (See Appendix E for the full form.)

03

SECTION THREE



Part II: Technical & Compliance Requirements

03 · TECHNICAL & COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

The relationship you build with your Student Teacher is the heart of this experience — but a few technical and compliance pieces run alongside it. This section walks through what's required, when, and how, so you can find what you need quickly.

Compliance & Documentation

- **Observation frequency** — your Student Teacher will be observed at least four times, in person and remotely
- **Media release & consent** — collected within the Student Teacher's first week
- **L-TPP video** — a single 20-minute teaching video for NYSED certification
- **Feedback Form** — completed and returned to the College Supervisor after each formal assessment conversation

Video Recording for Remote Supervision and Lehman Teacher Performance Portfolio (L-TPP)

Over the course of the placement, your Student Teacher will be observed at least four times by a Lehman College faculty member — in person, remotely by video, typically through some combination of the two. Additionally, a 20-minute teaching video is required to complete a New York State Education Department (NYSED) Teacher Certification performance assessment, known as the Lehman Teacher Performance Portfolio (L-TPP).

Within their first week in your classroom, your Student Teacher will provide a media release and consent form created by NYCPS. These forms need to be signed by your students' parents or guardians and returned to your Student Teacher. If any of your students don't return a signed form — or their parents don't consent — simply seat those students, or otherwise place them, somewhere outside camera range. The School of Education will guide your Student Teacher in using a secure, online observation platform on their mobile device to record. That device can sit somewhere in the room, or you're welcome to hold it yourself. Recordings are uploaded to Lehman College's private online observation platform after recording.

Both the supervision/observation recordings and the 20-minute NYSED assessment video will be shared with Lehman College faculty for viewing, feedback, and evaluation.

**Quick reference**

Observation frequency, media release and consent, the L-TPP video, and the Feedback Form recur throughout the placement — bookmark these two pages.

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SECTION FOUR

Appendices



04 · APPENDICES

Appendix Index

- A Co-Teaching Strategies & Examples
- B Cooperating Teacher Sample Welcome Activities Checklist
- C Teacher Actions During Co-Teaching
- D One Teach–One Observe: Observing for Learning
- E Cooperating Teacher Feedback Form
- F Cooperating Teacher Tuition Waiver Policy & Application

Co-Teaching Strategies & Examples

Student Teachers & Cooperating Teachers will aim to implement these Co-Teaching strategies. They are not hierarchical — they can be used in any order and/or combined to best meet the needs of the students in the classroom.

One Teach, One Observe

One teacher has primary responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus the observation — where the teacher doing the observation is observing specific behaviors.

Example: One teacher can observe for specific types of questions asked by the instructing teacher; teacher movement; charting student participation; specific on-task behaviors; specific group interactions.

Tip When observing, collect data/evidence. Observation is not intended to make judgments, but to provide data on what is happening in the classroom and allow that information to impact future lessons.

One Teach, One Assist

An extension of One Teach, One Observe — one teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments.

Example: While one teacher has the instructional lead, the teacher assisting may ask clarifying questions, provide additional examples, or be the “voice” for students who don’t understand or are hesitant to share. As Student Teachers lead their first whole-group lesson, the Cooperating Teacher can oversee classroom management — allowing the Student Teacher to focus on pacing, questioning strategies, assessment, and movement.

Tip This strategy supports classroom management as students get their questions answered faster and behavior problems are addressed without stopping instruction. Pairs often identify a signal (e.g., standing under the clock) that allows for a quick conversation without interrupting the lesson.

Station Teaching

The co-teaching pair divides the instructional content into parts — each teacher instructs one of the groups, and groups rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station; often an independent station is used alongside the teacher-led stations.

Example: In a literacy lesson, the pair could divide into three stations: fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. In a science lesson, one station views a specimen under a microscope, another diagrams the specimen, and a third watches a short video of it in its natural setting.

Tip Stations cannot be hierarchical — students must be able to start at any station. This lets students work in smaller groups, lets the Student Teacher build confidence teaching a mini-lesson multiple times, and keeps the Cooperating Teacher actively engaged. Other adults (paraprofessionals, special educators, Title I teachers) can also lead stations. Pacing, voice, and noise levels must all be discussed prior to the lesson.

Parallel Teaching

Each teacher instructs half the students. Both teachers address the same instructional material using the same teaching strategy. The greatest benefit is the reduced student-to-teacher ratio.

Example: After reading a text selection, class is divided into two heterogeneous groups to discuss questions from the reading. In an elementary math lesson, students are divided into two smaller groups where each teacher supports the use of manipulatives for solving problems.

Tip Place students facing their teacher with backs to the other teacher/group to reduce distractions. Watching the Cooperating Teacher's timing and pacing helps Student Teachers learn. Pacing, voice, and noise levels must all be discussed prior to the lesson.

Supplemental Teaching

One teacher works with students at their expected grade level, while the other works with students who need material retaught, extended, or remediated.

Example: Reviewing a math exam, students who fell short of expected score work with one teacher who re-teaches concept(s) with support materials; second teacher builds on same concepts with additional problems with students who passed.

Tip Groupings are based on need identified from a specific exam or assessment. Both teachers should work with all students over time, so one teacher doesn't always work with students who are struggling or need extension. Group make-up is always changing.

Alternative or Differentiated Teaching

Two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students, but the avenue for getting there is different.

Example: In a lesson on predicting, one teacher leads a group in brainstorming significant events occurring in a story to predict what happens next. Second teacher's group predicts by connecting specific objects (e.g., a dirty dog collar, a \$20 bill, moldy cheese) to the story.

Tip A great way to incorporate learning styles into lessons; both instructors need to be clear on the outcome(s), since students should achieve the same objective but arrive there using different methods.

Team Teaching

Well-planned, team-taught lessons exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Both teachers are actively involved, and there is no clearly defined leader — both share the instruction, are free to interject, and are available to assist and respond to students.

Example: Both instructors share the reading of a story so students hear two voices. The Cooperating Teacher may begin discussing specific events; Student Teacher may then share a map or picture showing specifics of the event.

Tip Pairs often begin by team teaching a lesson, giving the Student Teacher scripted "fact time" in front of the class — more staged, but it lets students view the Student Teacher as a "real" teacher. Team teaching takes intense planning, but the longer pairs work together, the less time it takes as they learn what each other will contribute.

Cooperating Teacher: Sample Welcome Activities Checklist

Introductory Activities

- ☐ School culture
- ☐ Letter of introduction to parents
- ☐ Meeting key personnel
- ☐ Desk/storage assignment
- ☐ Use of collaborative log

Daily Activities

- ☐ Daily schedule
- ☐ Attendance procedures
- ☐ Lunchroom regulations
- ☐ Group movement
- ☐ Dismissal procedures
- ☐ Release of students to authorized persons
- ☐ Playground rules

Yearly Activities

- ☐ Fire drills
- ☐ Accident/first aid/health reporting
- ☐ Enrolling/readmitting pupils
- ☐ Testing programs
- ☐ Teacher meetings
- ☐ Parent-teacher meetings
- ☐ Snow day/late opening procedures
- ☐ Procedures for ill students
- ☐ Money collection (trips, book orders, photos)
- ☐ Home visitations/pupil gifts
- ☐ Parent reports
- ☐ Field trip rules

Organizational Activities

- ☐ District/building handbooks
- ☐ School organizational chart
- ☐ Calendar and hours
- ☐ Duplicating equipment and supply requisition
- ☐ Supervisory policies
- ☐ Media center policies
- ☐ Parking

Teacher Actions During Co-Teaching

If one teacher is leading instruction...	The other can be doing this...
Observing for: student understanding/questions (body language, expressions); types of questions asked; student interactions and behaviors; teacher movement	Charting: where questions are directed; gender of responders; on-task/off-task behavior; teacher wait time; teacher or student behaviors
Circulating: checking comprehension; proximity control for behavior management; one-on-one support	Collecting and reviewing last night's homework
Introducing a social or study skill	Taking roll
Reviewing directions; modeling the first problem	Writing instructions on the board
Repeating or clarifying difficult concepts	Passing out papers
Giving instructions orally	Facilitating a silent activity
Introducing a new concept to the whole group	Asking clarifying questions
Reading a test aloud to a group	Proctoring a test silently with a group
Explaining a new concept through discussion	Introducing a new concept through role play or modeling
Providing enriching or extended activities on a concept already covered	Re-teaching or reviewing an old concept with students who didn't understand it
Providing enriching activities related to test items	Re-teaching concepts or questions missed on an exam with the students who missed them
Predicting what comes next in a text by brainstorming with a group	Predicting what comes next using objects already introduced in the story
Re-teaching or pre-teaching with a small group	Monitoring the large group working on practice materials
Facilitating sustained silent reading	Reading aloud quietly with a small group
Lecturing	Modeling note taking on the board
Running last-minute copies or errands	Reviewing homework; providing a study or test-taking strategy
Prepping half the class for one side of a debate	Prepping the other half for the opposing side
Checking for understanding by leading a discussion with half the class	Checking for understanding with the other half of the class
Facilitating a station or group	Facilitating a station or group

The main focus of co-teaching is to find ways to keep both teachers actively engaged with students and their learning.

TQE Strategies (2005), with adaptations from Murawski & Dieker (2004). Copyright 2013, The Academy for Co-Teaching and Collaboration at St. Cloud State University. Original research funded by a US Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership Grant.

One Teach–One Observe: Observing for Learning

In the left-hand column, note one to five examples of student learning behaviors that occur during a 45–60 minute class session. Watch for individual students, groups of students, or the whole class exhibiting behaviors that signal they’ve met the lesson’s learning outcomes. In the middle column, identify the instructional moves — the teacher behaviors — that created the conditions for that learning. In the right-hand column, note a timestamp for when the learning and instructional moves occurred.

NAME

DATE OF OBSERVATION

TIME

GRADE LEVEL

LESSON CONTENT (CHECK ONE)

☐ Reading ☐ Writing ☐ Mathematics

STRUCTURE (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ Whole group ☐ Small groups ☐ Individualized (“seatwork”)

What student(s) are doing	What teacher(s) is doing	Time stamp

General observations (elements of high-quality instruction observed during the lesson)

Cooperating Teacher Feedback Form

You complete this form twice — at mid-term (Weeks 6–8) and at the end of the placement (Weeks 12–14) — and return it to the College Supervisor after talking the assessment through with your Student Teacher. Submitted Feedback Forms are also reviewed before a tuition waiver is issued (Appendix F).

FPO · FULL RUBRIC

Reserved for the full Danielson Framework-based rubric

Reserved space for the full Cooperating Teacher Feedback Form, unchanged from v6: 20 rated components across the four Danielson domains listed below, plus the Lehman STEF items on Leadership/Collaboration and Technology Integration, each on a 1–5 rating scale. Set as one row per component in the table style used in Appendices C and D, the form runs approximately four to six pages.

- 1

Domain 1 · Planning and Preparation
-
- 2

Domain 2 · Classroom Environment
-
- 3

Domain 3 · Instruction
-
- 4

Domain 4 · Professional Responsibilities
-
- L

Lehman STEF items · Leadership/Collaboration, Technology Integration

Cooperating Teacher Tuition Waiver Policy & Application

A perk of working with a Student Teacher: a 3-credit CUNY tuition waiver for every 10 or more weeks of supervision. A minimum of 10 weeks (full-time), or 360 total hours of supervising and mentoring a Lehman College Student Teacher, is required for a 3-credit waiver; a 1-credit waiver may be issued for a single 4-week (full-time) placement. Waivers must be used within one year of issuance, and eligibility requires submitted Cooperating Teacher Feedback Forms, which are reviewed before a waiver is issued.

Visit the Cooperating Teacher webpage — QR code and link are on the cover — to access the online application and forms.

How to apply

- 1 Complete the online Cooperating Teacher Tuition Waiver Application Form.
- 2 Complete the fillable PDF Bursar Waiver Application.
- 3 Submit a resume (*first-time applicants only*).
- 4 Email the Bursar Waiver Application and resume together to clinical.practice@lehman.cuny.edu — subject line: your name + Tuition Waiver Request + school.
- 5 The tuition waiver is emailed back after the semester ends. Register for your courses, then contact the Bursar's Office directly — handling varies by CUNY campus.

About CUNY tuition waivers

- Credits must be used within one year — the eligible semesters are listed on the waiver.
- Maximum of 3 credits per waiver, and up to two waivers (6 credits) per semester.
- Credits are awarded only after Cooperating Teacher Feedback Forms are submitted.
- There is an 18-credit lifetime maximum per person.
- All follow-up after the waiver is sent happens directly with the Bursar's Office.
- Waivers cannot be replaced if lost.
- Full policy details are in CUNY's University Tuition and Fee Manual, Special Programs section.

Where Cooperating Teachers have used their credits

Lehman degrees in Educational Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Counselor Education, and Social Work, or advanced certificates in TESOL/ENL, Special Education, and Bilingual Extensions.



QUESTIONS?

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