August 5, 2015

Re: Assessment of Student Teachers

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

The Teacher Education Program at UW-EC would like to thank you for partnering with us in the formative development of our teacher candidates (TCs). Without your dedication to equitable and quality education and your willingness to model best practices in teaching and co-teaching for our students, the continued development of our students would be impossible.

This letter is to explain an impending change in the way in which student teachers will be evaluated in Wisconsin. The state is requiring all teacher candidates (TCs) to submit a performance-based assessment called the edTPA effective the fall of 2015. This assessment is a portfolio that the TC compiles during their student teaching placement. The portfolio has three evaluation components to it: 1) Lesson Planning - three to five lesson plans; 2) Instructional engagement – using one or two video clips (approximately 20 minutes) of the student teacher teaching; and, 3) Assessment - evidence showing the impact of the instruction. In general the edTPA portfolio is an exercise in critical thinking where the TC explains to the evaluator their rationale for the instructional choices they have made prior to, and during instruction. TCs must also provide an informed reflection on the impact of those choices. In this coming fall, TCs will submit their edTPA portfolios to a national repository where they will be evaluated by a licensure-specific scorer who has been especially trained to evaluate each portfolio using the edTPA rubric designed for that licensure area.

The Teacher Education Program at UW-EC has been piloting edTPA evaluation framework for several semesters. In the fall semester of 2014 for example, fifty four (54) TCs were evaluated using the edTPA framework. Twenty nine (29) were nationally scored and the remainder were locally scored by faculty and student teaching supervisors. An additional 16 TCs were evaluated in Spring 2015. We have been using the data we have collected to hone our approach for preparing our TCs for this major evaluation.

What will this mean for you in your role as a Cooperating Teacher?

1. Continue to mentor your student teacher just as you have in the past.

2. Have regular interactions with your student teacher regarding the tasks associated with the edTPA portfolio. Each TC has a licensure-specific handbook that they will be using to guide them in assembling the components of their portfolio. In addition, all TCs will be receiving instructions from their student teaching seminar leader as well as opportunities to construct their edTPA materials.

3. Assist your TC by providing as much background knowledge of the pupils as you feel is necessary (e.g., IEP goals, 503 plans, ELL plans, prior testing data, etc.)
4. Assist your TC by encouraging them to think deeply about their instructional choices but be careful not to overly coach them. They should be skillful enough at this point in their development to demonstrate some independent professionalism.

Again, please know that we appreciate your continued support of the Teacher Education Program at UWEC and thank you in advance for partnering with us as we implement this new mandate. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

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