



School of Education — Teacher Certification Program

Field Supervisor Playbook

Coaching Conversations · Observation Look-Fors · Milestones · Case Studies · Quick Reference

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How to Use This Playbook

This playbook is the ongoing companion to the Field Supervisor Orientation — not a one-time handout. It's meant to travel with you across the year: a quick reference during a pre-observation conversation, a source of coaching question stems before a debrief with your Teacher Candidate, and a place to capture your own patterns and questions as a professional learning community of supervisors. Please feel free to reach out should you ever have any questions or need further support. Optional Field Supervisor Check-ins are also a time to share concerns, knowledge, and resources.

- Coaching Conversation Guides — reflective stems for every stage of the year
- Observation Look-Fors — organized by the six SOE/TPEP-aligned domains
- Sample Feedback — evaluative language next to coaching language
- Quarterly Milestones — what growth should look like, Autumn through Spring
- Case Studies — common supervisory dilemmas to talk through together
- Quick Reference — four-tier framework, at a glance
- Reflection Pages — yours, to fill in across the year
- Appendix A & B — the two observation forms used during the academic year; digital forms are available on OFPP Webpage

1. Guiding Principles from Field Placement Concerns & Resolution Guidebook

Ful protocol and forms live in this guidebook — this is the at-a-glance version for the moment you need it.

- Address concerns early and directly whenever possible.
- Make all attempts to draw from direct evidence and observable behavior when engaging in critical conversations rather than making assumptions about another or reacting based on emotional responses.
- Attempt to resolve concerns at the lowest appropriate level.
- Maintain professional, respectful, and solution-focused communication.
- Focus on student learning and Teacher Candidate growth.
- Document concerns only as needed for the current tier.
- Respect school partnerships and protect confidentiality.
- Escalate immediately when safety, ethics, discrimination, or legal concerns arise.

Guiding posture at every tier: resolve at the lowest effective level, name concerns early and specifically, separate “fit” from “performance,” and address people directly rather than in group settings — while staying mindful of the power difference between a candidate and the person evaluating them. When in doubt about tier or next step, OFPP is available for consultation at any point — you don't have to carry a Tier 3 or 4 situation alone.

2. Coaching Conversation Guides

Every coaching conversation in the TCP model follows the same posture, drawn from Elena Aguilar's coaching approach: lead with curiosity before advocacy, describe evidence before interpretation, celebrate strengths before naming growth, and close with one or two specific, shared commitments.

The Notice → Wonder → Next Step Framework

Notice	Wonder	Next Step
Describe what you saw — objective, specific evidence.	Ask a reflective question that invites the candidate's own thinking.	Land on one manageable, high-leverage goal.

Pre-Observation Questions to Ask the Teacher Candidate

- What are your primary learning goals for students today?
- Is there something in particular you would like me to observe or collect evidence about?
- What goal or feedback from our previous observation are you working on today?

Core Coaching Questions

Five Core Questions for Every Post-Observation Conversation

1. What felt successful, and what evidence supports your thinking?
2. What did you notice about student learning and engagement?
3. What surprised or challenged you?
4. If you taught this lesson again, what would you keep or change?
5. What is one next step for your growth, and what support would help you get there?

Post Observation Questions to Ask the Teacher Candidate — Autumn

- What are you noticing about your relationships with students?
- What evidence tells you that students are beginning to trust you and see you as one of their teachers?
- What felt successful in your teaching today? What makes you say that?
- What did you notice about student engagement and participation?
- When did students seem most engaged in the learning? What was happening at that moment?
- What are you learning about the students in this classroom—their strengths, needs, interests, cultures, languages, and ways of learning?
- What is beginning to feel more natural or comfortable for you as a teacher?
- What still feels challenging or uncertain?
- What is one responsibility you feel ready to take on next?
- What support from your Mentor Teacher or Field Supervisor would help you take that next step?

Post Observations Questions to Ask the Teacher Candidate – Winter & Spring

- What felt most successful in today's lesson? What evidence supports your thinking?
- What evidence tells you that students learned what you intended them to learn?
- What did you notice about who participated and who may have had less access to the learning?
- How did you respond when students needed additional support or challenge?
- What instructional decision had the greatest impact on student learning?
- How did your assessment of student understanding influence what you did during the lesson?
- How did you support students' academic language and different ways of demonstrating their understanding?
- If you taught this lesson again, what would you keep? What would you change?
- What feedback from previous observations did you intentionally apply today?
- What growth do you see in yourself since your previous observation?
- What is one area you want to strengthen before the next observation?
- What support or resources would help you make that growth?

Keep students at the center: Effective supervision considers not only what the Teacher Candidate is doing, but how students are responding, participating, learning, and experiencing the classroom.

Conversation Agreements

- Lead with curiosity before advocacy.
- Describe evidence before offering interpretations.
- Listen to understand.
- Celebrate strengths before discussing growth.
- Approach every conversation as an act of caring, culturally responsive practice.
- End with one or two specific commitments.

The Observation Cycle

Before the Observation

- Review the Teacher Candidate's lesson plan and previous feedback/goal.
- Ask the candidate what they would like you to pay particular attention to.
- Clarify the focus for the observation.

During the Observation

- Capture objective, specific evidence connected to the six domains.
- Attend to both teacher actions **and student responses/learning**.
- Look for evidence connected to the candidate's previous goal.

After the Observation

- Invite the Teacher Candidate to reflect first.
- Use evidence to name strengths and areas for growth.
- Identify one or two high-leverage next steps.
- Clarify supports, responsibilities, and follow-up.

3. Observation Look-For, by Domain

Six domains, aligned to the SOE Essential Skills & Dispositions and the TPEP criteria, anchor every observation. Use these to keep feedback grounded in evidence rather than preference.

Domain	Look-For	Possible Noticing's
Planning & Equity	Objectives aligned to standards; instruction reflects students' backgrounds and needs; scaffolds planned; multiple entry points.	Connected content to lived experience; used visual/linguistic supports; differentiated tasks or grouping.
Academic Language	Language objective identified; academic vocabulary taught; speaking/listening/reading/writing opportunities; supports embedded; translanguage encouraged (students draw on home dialect(s) and/or language(s) as a resource, not a deficit); multimodalities honored (talk, writing, visuals, gesture, digital).	Modeled academic language; students used content vocabulary; sentence frames or word banks in use; students moved between dialects/languages to build meaning; students showed understanding through more than one mode.

Learning Environment & Relationships	Clear routines; students feel physically and emotionally safe; caring, respectful interactions; inclusive, belonging environment.	Greeted students by preferred name/pronouns; students took meaningful academic risks; respectful redirection if needed.
Student Engagement	Active engagement; critical thinking; meaningful discussion and collaboration; multiple contributors.	Higher-order questioning; students explained reasoning to peers; field supervisor amplified a range of voices.
Assessment for Learning	Evidence of understanding gathered throughout; feedback timely and specific; goals/success criteria visible; instruction adjusted.	Exit tickets, questioning, or work samples used; students self-assessed; pacing adjusted from evidence.
Professional Practice & Dispositions	Prepared and organized; effective communication; receptive to feedback; models a caring, culturally responsive and inclusive teacher identity; cultural humility, integrity, responsibility.	Materials prepared in advance; collaborated with mentor; reflected thoughtfully in post-conference.

Language note: “caring,” “culturally responsive and inclusive,” “translanguaging,” and “multimodalities” describe honoring students’ full linguistic and cultural repertoire — home/community languages included — and the many ways students can show what they know: talk, writing, visuals, gesture, digital media.

Norming reminder: focus on objective evidence over personal preference, name both strengths and growth, and consider development over time rather than a single lesson in isolation.

4. Sample Feedback: Evaluative vs. Coaching Language

Evaluative	Coaching-Oriented
“You need better classroom management.”	“I noticed several transitions lasted about five minutes and about half of the students appeared disengaged. What did you notice? What strategies might help students transition more efficiently in the future?”
“I would have done it this way...”	“What did you notice? What evidence supports that? What might you try next?”
“Students were disengaged”	“During independent work, 8 of 24 students were off task for approximately five minutes.”
“Directions were unclear”	“Four students asked what they were supposed to do after directions were given.”
“Students understood the concept”	“18 of 22 students accurately explained their reasoning during the exit task.”

Underneath both columns is the same commitment: growth-oriented, asset-based, student-centered coaching — strengths named before suggestions, always anchored in evidence.

5. Quarterly Milestones for our TCP Teacher Candidates

Autumn	Observation · relationship building · learning classroom routines · small groups · professional identity.
Winter	Co-planning · co-teaching · instruction · assessment · feedback. Undergraduate program begins their lead teaching towards the end of quarter.
Spring	Graduate program begins their lead teaching · professional independence · reflection · employment preparation.

Developmental Lens: Expectations should increase across the year. Evidence that represents appropriate growth in Autumn may not represent sufficient independence by Spring.

6. Case Studies: Common Supervisory Dilemmas

Facilitated Discussion Guide for Field Supervisors

These reflect authentic situations that call for coaching, professional judgment, and collaboration — not a single “correct” answer. Each case follows the same arc: Reflection → Immediate Response → Collaboration → Next Steps. Supervision is developmental, collaborative, and candidate-centered.

Case 1

A mentor teacher says:

“I don't think this candidate is ready.”

Discussion Questions for Field Supervisor:

- What information do you need before responding?
- What evidence has the mentor observed?
- What, if anything, has the candidate already been told?
- What patterns (if any) have you observed?
- How urgent is the concern?

Step 1: Listen First

Avoid immediately agreeing or disagreeing. Instead say:

“Tell me more. Can you share specific examples of what you've observed?”

Focus on collecting evidence rather than opinions.

Step 2: Documentation, Submission, & Recordkeeping

Teacher Candidates, Mentor Teachers, and University Field Supervisors sometimes hesitate at this step simply because it's unclear whose job it is to fill out which form, or where it goes once it's done. The charts below should answer both questions.

Tier	Form	Completed By	Submitted By	Submitted To	Timeline	Record Location
1	Tier 1 Conversation & Reflection Log	Teacher Candidate and/or Mentor Teacher	Not routinely submitted	Retained by Teacher Candidate/Mentor Teacher; available to University Field Supervisor	Entry within 48 hours	Working document

2	Tier 2 Triad Conference & Collaborative Action Plan	Completed collaboratively during facilitated conference	Conference facilitator	OFPP + copy to participants	Immediately following conference	OFPP case/placement record
3	Tier 3 OFPP Referral & Review Form	University Field Supervisor or OFPP TCP Coordinator	Referring party	OFPP Administrator	Within 48 hours of Tier 3 referral	OFPP case file
4	Tier 4 Critical Incident Report & Response	Reporter/OFPP Administrator	Reporter or OFPP Administrator	OFPP Administrator	Same day	Restricted OFPP case file

Key Coaching Message

The purpose of an individual observation is not simply to determine whether a candidate “passes” or “fails.” It is to gather evidence of practice, identify strengths and areas for growth, determine appropriate supports and next steps, and monitor the candidate's development over time.

Case 2

A teacher candidate becomes emotional during feedback.

Discussion Questions

- What caused the emotional response?
- How do you maintain psychological safety?
- When do you pause coaching? When do you continue?

During the Conference

Stay calm. Pause. Allow silence. Say something like:

“I can see this feedback feels difficult. That's okay. Let's take a moment.”

Avoid minimizing feelings, rushing forward, or changing the feedback. Instead, acknowledge emotions while maintaining expectations.

Shift to Reflection

- What part feels hardest?
- What surprised you?
- What support would help you?

Re-center on Growth

“This observation is one point in your professional journey. Our goal is growth — not perfection.”

Follow-Up

- Check in within a day or two.
- Send a short encouraging email.
- Clarify next coaching steps.
- Document the conference.

If emotions appear connected to mental health, personal crisis, discrimination, or harassment

Follow university reporting procedures and notify OFP&P when appropriate.

Case 3

You observe excellent relationships but weak instruction.

Discussion Questions

- How do you celebrate strengths without avoiding difficult feedback?
- How can strong relationships become leverage for instructional growth?

Possible Feedback

Start with evidence:

"Students clearly trust you. They are eager to participate and feel comfortable taking risks."

Then connect to instruction:

"Because you've built such a strong classroom culture, you're now ready to leverage those relationships to increase academic rigor."

Specific evidence: "I noticed students were engaged socially, but lesson questions remained primarily at the recall level."

Instead of saying "Instruction needs work," say:

"Let's think about how your questioning can push students toward deeper thinking while maintaining the supportive environment you've created."

Coaching Goal

Move from strong relationships → strong relationships + strong instruction.

Candidate Reflection Questions

- What felt successful today, and what evidence supports your thinking?
- What did you notice about student learning and engagement?
- Where did students seem to experience challenge or confusion?
- What instructional decision are you most satisfied with?
- If you taught this lesson again, what would you keep and what would you change?
- What feedback from an earlier observation were you working on today?
- What is one next step you would like to focus on?
- What support would help you with that next step?

Case 4

The mentor teacher dominates the post-conference.

Discussion Questions

- How do you honor the mentor's expertise?
- How do you ensure the candidate develops reflective practice?

Set Expectations Before Beginning

"Let's start by hearing from our candidate first. Then we'll each add observations."

Reflection Order

- Candidate reflects
- Mentor shares observations
- Field Supervisor synthesizes
- Collaborative goal setting

Reflection Prompts (ask the candidate)

- What felt successful today?
- What would you change?
- What evidence tells you students learned?
- What questions do you have?

Only after the candidate reflects should the mentor contribute.

If the Mentor Continues to Dominate

Respectfully redirect:

"Those are really helpful observations. I'd like to pause for a moment and hear how the candidate experienced the lesson."

"Let's give our candidate a chance to process first before we continue."

Long-Term Strategy

If this becomes a pattern, meet privately with the mentor and frame it positively:

"One of the strongest ways we help candidates develop is by giving them space to analyze their own teaching before we offer our perspectives."

Case 5

The Teacher Candidate is not showing expected growth. You have provided feedback about the same instructional concern across multiple observations. The Teacher Candidate is receptive during conferences, but the concern continues to appear in practice.

Discussion Questions

- What evidence demonstrates that this is a pattern rather than a single difficult lesson?
- What previous feedback and supports have been provided?
- What does the Teacher Candidate understand about the concern?
- What specific improvement would you expect to see?
- Is continued coaching appropriate, or has the concern reached the point where consultation with OFPP is warranted?
- What documentation is needed?

When Coaching Is Not Enough

Most concerns can initially be addressed through coaching, feedback, and clearly identified next steps. When a concern is persistent, significant, or involves safety, ethics, professional conduct, discrimination, or legal requirements, consult the **Field Placement Concerns & Resolutions Guidebook** and contact OFPP as appropriate.

7. Reflection Pages

Space to capture your own patterns, questions, and ideas as the year unfolds — bring these to optional PLC check-ins.

Autumn Quarter

- **Patterns I'm noticing across my Teacher Candidate:**

- A coaching move that worked well:
- A question or dilemma I want to bring to a Field Supervisor Check-In:

Winter Quarter

- Patterns I'm noticing across my Teacher Candidate:
- A coaching move that worked well:
- A question or dilemma I want to bring to a Field Supervisor Check-In:

Spring Quarter

- Patterns I'm noticing across my Teacher Candidate:
- A coaching move that worked well:
- A question or dilemma I want to bring to a Field Supervisor Check-In:

Appendix

Appendix A — Autumn Quarter Clinical Coaching Reflection Guide

[Document Link](#)

Appendix B — UWT TCP Clinical Observation and Coaching Record (Winter/Spring)

[Document Link](#)