

# Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #4: Role Modeling<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

In this fourth publication of the *Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring* series, the mentorship focus will be on the area of role modeling. Role modeling is achieved by the cooperating teacher positively modeling all aspects of teaching. This can be accomplished through demonstrating teaching methods, explaining classroom management techniques, and modeling effective communication (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017; Barry, 2019; Scandura, 1992). Through observation, the student teacher decides what and how they will implement or not implement as an educator in their own classroom.

## Strategies for Role Modeling

The strategies below were created from conversations with cooperating teachers within school-based agricultural education, as well as from previous research conducted in this area (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017; Barry, 2019; Scandura, 1992).

### 1. *Involve the student teacher in all the roles as a teacher.*

Involving the student teacher in all the roles as a teacher gives the student teacher the opportunity to observe and learn about each role. As a School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) teacher, there are often responsibilities beyond the classroom (i.e., FFA advisor, land laboratory manager, community leader, and SAE supervisor). Some examples of involving the student teacher in all of your roles as a teacher are (1) allowing the student teacher to attend all meetings (parent/teacher conferences, FFA supervisory committee meetings, professional developments, budgeting meetings with the school secretary, etc.), (2) demonstrating and explaining to the student teacher how paperwork is completed for all school and FFA events, and (3) coaching the student teacher through difficult conversations with students.

### 2. *Talk to the student teacher about how to become an excellent teacher through all phases of their career.*

Talking to the student teacher about how to become an excellent teacher through all phases of their career helps

the student teacher understand the importance of continual learning and growth as an educator. Some examples of talking to the student teacher about how to become an excellent teacher are (1) sharing personal growth stories (balancing time, prioritizing efforts, and connecting with students), (2) having the student teacher attend professional developments during the internship, and (3) describing how to keep students at the center of your classroom and career.

### 3. *Share approaches for SAE program development and supervision.*

Sharing approaches for supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program development and supervision increases the student teacher's knowledge and understanding of the importance of SAEs. Some examples of sharing approaches for SAE program development and supervision are (1) talking to the student teacher about the SAE program at the school, (2) discussing how the program is facilitated and supervised (i.e., requirements, grades, types, etc.), and (3) having the student teacher directly involved with SAE supervision and visits (local and state fair, school enterprises, student projects, etc.).

### 4. *Share philosophies for FFA advising.*

Sharing philosophies for FFA advising introduces the student teacher to various methods of advising FFA students. Some examples of sharing philosophies for FFA advising are (1) discussing how and why the FFA chapter is organized at the school, (2) giving the student teacher the opportunity to advise the chapter (i.e., coach a career development event (CDE) team, organize an event with the officer team, and stand in as advisor during chapter meetings), and (3) providing opportunities for the student teacher to ask questions about the chapter.

### 5. *Discuss effective student discipline strategies with the student teacher for maintaining a productive learning environment.*

Effective student discipline strategies for maintaining a productive learning environment are important skills for

the student teacher to develop during the internship. Some examples of discussing effective student discipline strategies are (1) explaining to the student teacher how classroom management is addressed in the classroom, (2) allowing the student teacher to observe one-on-one meetings with students about behavior (when applicable), (3) following up with the student teacher after student discipline strategies are implemented to discuss why the strategies were utilized, and (4) discussing with the student teacher a variety of teaching methods and the various levels of classroom management that may be needed or required.

6. *Coach the student teacher on strategies for developing a positive rapport with students.*

A positive rapport with students can help prevent discipline issues and can increase student learning gains (Frisby & Martin, 2010). Some examples of coaching the student teacher on strategies for developing a positive rapport with students are (1) discussing the importance of positive and appropriate relationships with the students, (2) providing examples of how positive rapport can be created with the students, and (3) allowing the student teacher to practice these strategies during the internship.

The area of role modeling that should be provided by the cooperating teachers for their students includes the six components of involving the student teacher in all roles as a teacher, talking to the student teacher about how to become an excellent teacher through all phases of their career, sharing approaches for SAE program development and supervision, sharing philosophies for FFA advising, discussing effective student discipline strategies, and coaching the student teacher on strategies for developing a positive rapport with students. When student teachers feel supported in this area, they are more likely to have a positive internship experience and remain in the profession (Edgar et al., 2011; Kasperbauer & Roberts, 2007; Roberts, 2006; Rocca, 2005). For additional information related to role modeling, check out [www.UFCooperatingTeachersSupport.com](http://www.UFCooperatingTeachersSupport.com).

## References

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## Appendix A: Best Practices for Mentoring: Cooperating Teacher Series

### *Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #1: Supporting Cooperating Teachers*

An overview of the role of cooperating teachers as mentors for student teachers during their capstone experience. This publication is intended for SBAE cooperating teachers and those who support cooperating teachers in their role as mentors.

***Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #2: Social Support***

An overview of the best practices for mentoring with a focus on social support is provided utilizing specific practices for school-based agricultural education program.

***Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #3: Professional Support***

An overview of the best practices for mentoring with a focus on professional support is provided utilizing specific practices for school-based agricultural education program.

***Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #4: Role Modeling***

An overview of the best practices for mentoring with a focus on role modeling is provided utilizing specific practices for school-based agricultural education program.

***Cooperating Teachers' Best Practices for Mentoring #5: Implementation and Adoption of a Cooperating Teacher Support Program***

An overview for school-based agricultural education (SBAE) program coordinators on how to implement or enhance a research-based cooperating teacher preparation and support program for mentoring student teachers.

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