

What Would You Do?

If you've finished reading *Evaluating a Student Teacher*, the final book of *Student Teaching: The Cooperating Teacher Series*, then you are ready to practice your supervisory skills by problem-solving the following four case studies. These are either actual vignettes or composites of similar situations that have happened during the student teaching phase.

In real-time situations, the best course of action takes into account the persons involved and the specific setting; however, we do provide some commentary for guiding your decisions.

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CASE STUDY 1: RECORDING MEMORIES

You drove to the college campus to attend an optional meeting for cooperating teachers. Recognizing a few of your friends, you joined them at a table just in time for the end of Audrey's story about the recent situation with her student teacher. "Using his cell phone, he sent photos of our students on the zoo field trip to several of his roommates!" Another cooperating teacher, Rita, chimed in, "That sounds like the student teacher that I had who posted the composite class photo on her MySpace page. I had her take them off as soon as I heard. That was the year that I had two students who transferred to the safety of our school." Your curiosity is piqued. You ask the table of teachers, "How should a cooperating teacher handle these privacy situations without sounding paranoid?" If you were at the table, how would you respond?

1. "Use the informative angle. These student teachers need an explanation of the dangers of the seemingly innocent act of sharing photos."
2. "Nowadays I tell all my student teacher at the first meeting that any, any, any items connected to school should never be part of their personal Internet space."

3. "I'd rather sound paranoid than be eternally distraught if anything happened to my students because of my lack of response."
4. "I have my student teacher accompany me to report to the principal any possible breach of confidentiality."
5. What other responses might you consider?



Comment

It is important that the student teacher understand the safety issues at risk when an image is displayed publicly. Once the photo leaves the possession of the student teacher, the student teacher no longer has control over who sees the photo, where else it will be distributed, and how it will be used. No matter what memory the student teacher is capturing (whether in a still photo or action recording), it puts the pupils in harm's way and the student teacher at legal risk.

Henry, M. A. & Weber, A. (2010). Legal and Ethical Aspects of Student Teaching. In Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 7th ed. (pp. 280-281, Case Study 71). Latham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.



CASE STUDY 2: FIVE MINUTES OF RISK

Your student teacher, Eric, failed to make enough copies of a worksheet his pupils needed to complete a homework assignment. He left his students alone while he went to the teachers' room to make the copies he needed. When he returned a few minutes later, the floor in the back of the room was covered with broken glass. In Eric's absence, two of his students got out of their seats and were "showing off" for their classmates. During their stunt, one of the students fell through the glass front of a display case. Miraculously, the student was not badly injured but did require a trip to the emergency room to close a gash in his arm. Upon learning of the incident, the pupil's parents contacted the school's principal and informed him they were filing negligence charges against the student teacher and the school district. What should you do?

1. Make sure an accident report was filed concerning the incident.
2. Call your attorney and the school attorney.
3. Try to schedule a conference with the pupil's parents.
4. Contact the college supervisor.
5. Both you and the student teacher should record the facts recalled from the incident. Keep these on file.
6. Meet with the principal to get advice.
7. What other actions might you consider?



Comment

This case has all the earmarks for a successful negligence suit. The fact that the students were unsupervised and that the accident likely would not have occurred if Eric had been present puts him and the school in legal jeopardy. In addition, an attorney may inquire if Eric was informed as to the whereabouts of the cooperating teacher. Leaving pupils unsupervised, even for a brief period, is a dangerous practice and puts educators in legal peril.

Henry, M. A. & Weber, A. (2010). Legal and Ethical Aspects of Student Teaching. In Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 7th ed. (pp. 283-284, Case Study 72). Latham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.



CASE STUDY 3: PROBLEMS WITH TIME

It is school policy for teachers to report at school by 8:00 a.m. It is past 8:15 and Michelle, your student teacher, has not yet arrived. When it is time to begin class, you proceed to teach the student teacher's lesson.

The school secretary notifies you later in the day that Michelle had called at 9:00 a.m. saying that she would not be in today because she had some things she needed to get done at the college. She has been late before but this is the first time that she has not shown up at all. How would you deal with this situation?

1. Ignore it unless it occurs again.
2. When she returns, obtain from Michelle more details about her decision, the repeated pattern of lateness, and the priority that student teaching holds for her.
3. Have a frank talk with the student teacher and tell her that she is dealing with her obligations in an irresponsible way.
4. Discuss the matter with her college supervisor.
5. Have an administrator talk with her about the need for meeting a time schedule.



Comment

Professional procedures for absences and tardiness are a recommended discussion at the onset of the experience. The attendance rules of a school are probably going to be more rigid than the guidelines that students experience at a college. It seems that it must be communicated to the student teacher that she is expected to meet her responsibilities without prompting and that sudden, nonmedical absences can cause difficulty for the program of the school and her professional reputation.

Adapted from Henry, M. A. & Weber, A. (2010). Problems of Student Teachers. In Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 7th ed. (pp. 325-326, Case Study 84). Latham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.



CASE STUDY 4: NOTHING LEFT TO PROVE

You feel that Joyce is doing so well teaching your classes that you find it difficult to think of her as a student teacher. There seem to be no areas where any type of criticism is warranted. She is at the beginning teacher level. How do you go about establishing any kind of evaluation procedures in this situation?

1. Focus evaluation discussion on why her teaching is so effective.
2. Make sure the criteria you are using to evaluate her performance are valid and essential for good teaching.
3. Ask Joyce to identify areas of her teaching that could be refined and to set new goals.
4. Use audio or visual recording so Joyce can self-evaluate.
5. Ask the principal or another teacher to observe and evaluate a lesson.
6. Encourage Joyce to explore new teaching strategies.
7. What other actions might you consider?



Comment

If Joyce is performing at the level that one would expect of a practicing teacher, then she is obviously a Quadrant 4 student teacher. Such talented student teachers are ready to consider how their actions impact their pupils, experiment with some advanced teaching techniques, and set their own goals. These steps coupled with good conferencing techniques maximize the opportunity to advance the skills of the future teacher and lead to an exceptional evaluation and letter of recommendation for the distinguished student teacher. May there be many student teachers like Joyce!

Henry, M. A. & Weber, A. (2010). Evaluating the Student Teacher. In *Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 7th ed.* (pp. 370-371, Case Study 95). Latham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

If you would like to practice solving more situations, over ninety student teaching case studies can be found in *Supervising Student Teachers the Professional Way, 7th edition* which is published by Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2010.