Teaching Assistantship
Manual

Prepared by
The Office of Teacher Education
Field Experience

Room 222, Academic Complex
Telephone: 716 286 8683
Office Fax: 716 286 8740
A Note of Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for welcoming our Niagara University Teacher Candidates into your school and into your classroom. We appreciate that there are added expectations and effort that go along with serving as a Mentor Teacher. We are pleased that you have accepted this responsibility and look forward to partnering with you on behalf of our aspiring Teacher Candidates.

In collaboration with school partners in the field each year, our goal at NU is to prepare out Teacher Candidates to become proficient classroom teachers. Equally important, we strive to provide opportunities for candidates to contribute significantly in assisting classroom teachers and students in the process of learning during their valuable hours in classrooms.

We trust that as you mentor our Teacher Candidates, you will also grow professionally and that you will feel rewarded for your professional contribution to promoting continuing excellence in classrooms. We thank you and wish for each of you a satisfying and productive year in your classroom.

Office of Teacher Education Field Experience
Introduction to the Teaching Assistantship Manual

The Teaching Assistantship Manual serves in a continuing effort to ensure that the three developmental phases of field experience in our NU teacher preparation program are as clear and meaningful as possible for candidates and classroom teachers. A second intent of the Manual is to improve communication among mentor teachers, teacher candidates, and university faculty regarding Teaching Assistantships. The manual is intended to specifically provide information, requirements, and expectations regarding Phase Two (Teaching Assistantship), in the context of being the middle phase of a three-part developmental student teaching experience at Niagara University.

An Overview of NU Teacher Education Field Experience

Over the duration of the teacher education program at NU, candidates are provided with approximately 500 hours of developmental field experiences in classrooms under the supervision of certified experienced teachers. Teaching Assistantships and the three phases of field experience are aligned in the following developmental sequence:

Prior to Teaching Assistantships:
The three-step developmental process begins with Phase I which is a Pre-Service/Early Field Experience orientation to the classroom. Phase I is designed to provide the candidate with exposure to classrooms at different grade levels and the opportunity to become familiar with the various aspects of school culture through a variety of experiences that include: observation, teacher assistant, helping with special projects, and tutoring individual students or small groups. Undergraduate candidates must complete 20 hours per semester for a total of 100 hours prior to entrance into Teaching Assistantships. Graduate candidates must complete 50/75 hours prior to entry into Teaching Assistantships.

During Teaching Assistantships:
The Teaching Assistantship is designed to provide the pre-service candidate with opportunities to gain further experience in schools and to make the transition from student to teacher candidate as he/she begin to teach lessons. Undergraduate candidates must complete 30 hours per placement and Graduate candidates must complete two 38 hour placements. Candidates are expected to interact with students by assisting the classroom teacher, tutor individual students or small groups and teach a minimum of two lessons per placement based on Common Core State Standards. The candidate observes the teacher delivering lessons and assists students in the learning process, prior to teaching a lesson. The supervising teacher provides documentation of hours in the classroom and completes an assessment form that becomes part of the candidate’s Methods course grade.
**Following Teaching Assistantships:**
Having fulfilled 150 hours of documented pre-service field experience hours, and having met specific academic requirements, the candidate spends the entire Fall or Spring semester of senior year or final semester in two student teaching placements, each of approximately seven weeks duration. Student Teaching is designed to provide the teacher candidate the opportunity to practice and gain skills in a safe environment under the guidance of a skilled veteran teacher. The supervising teacher evaluates the candidate’s progress and completes a Final Student Teaching Report that recommends a “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” evaluation of the candidate’s performance.

**Stipend Payment:**
Teaching Assistantship Mentor Teachers complete the “Mandatory Stipend Form” found online to receive $100 (U.S.) stipend. Processing takes about 6 weeks.

**Requirements for Entry into Teaching Assistantships**
Undergraduate Candidates must have completed a minimum of 100 documented hours in field experience through the Pre-Service – Early Field Experience program, and Graduate Candidates must have completed 50/75 documented hours in Pre-Service field experience.

**High Needs School Placement Requirement:**
New York State Teacher certification requirements include at least one placement during field experience in a designated High Needs school.

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*It is often said that we come into the world as a blank slate,*
*a novel yet to be written,*
*a symphony not yet conducted.*

*If this is true,*
*then it is our teachers*
*who are the writers, the philosophers, the conductors of our lives*  
*from the very beginning.*

Jeffrey Russell,
What makes an effective teacher? Helium Education Secondary School
Teaching Assistantship: Instructions for Candidates

Purpose of Teaching Assistantships

The Teaching Assistantship component is designed to serve as a transition step toward student teaching. It is anticipated that, throughout this experience, Pre-Service Teacher Candidates will feel increasingly comfortable and confident in the classroom and in a teaching role.

The purpose of the Teaching Assistantship is three-fold:

1. To provide the teacher candidate with instructional experience in the candidate’s area of concentration and the opportunity to work with students and a mentor teacher in a classroom setting;
2. To provide the teacher candidate with a mentor who provides modeling in teaching, assists the candidate with lesson planning and lesson delivery, assesses and engages in professional dialogue with the candidate; and
3. To provide Methods Professors with a written assessment of the candidate’s performance in a classroom that becomes part of the grade for the Methods Course.

Instructions for Candidates:

1. Once you receive your placement (name of participating teacher, school and phone number), it will be your responsibility to:
   a) make the initial contact with the participating teacher
   b) arrange your visitation schedule to the school

2. Prior to student teaching, each Niagara University student is required to spend a minimum of 150 documented clock hours in field experience. During Methods classes, the requirement is a minimum of 30 documented clock hours for undergraduates and 75 documented clock hours for graduate students. The field experience as a component of Methods classes is termed, “Teaching Assistantship Program”.

3. Teaching Assistantship field placements are designed to consist of: observing, planning and delivering a minimum of two different lessons, assessment of student learning, working with individual students and/or small groups and assisting the teacher. It is preferred that more than two lessons are taught. Candidates are expected to collaborate with the participating teacher to plan lessons. Plans are to be submitted to the classroom teacher prior to teaching for review and feedback from the teacher. A debriefing session between candidate and participating teacher is expected to occur after each lesson is taught to reflect on the lesson, its impact on student learning, and to prepare for the next lesson to be taught.

4. Check with your methods professor for specific instructions that he/she may provide regarding a reflection log and related assignments.

5. Complete your timesheet to document the field experience hours you have spent in the classroom. The timesheet must be signed by the participating teacher and RETURNED TO THE FIELD EXPERIENCE OFFICE AS INDICATED ON THE BOTTOM OF THE FOUR-PART TIME SHEET.

6. At the end of the Assistantship, the participating teacher will complete a Teaching Assistantship Performance Assessment Form regarding your classroom experience and teaching performance. This form is completed and submitted online by your Mentor Teacher.

NOTE: A total of 150 hours of field experience in the classroom is required prior to student teaching. To receive credit toward certification, a copy of your timesheet and the performance assessment form must be provided to the Office of Field Experience. YOU MUST COMPLETE THIS FIELD EXPERIENCE IN ORDER TO PROCEED TO STUDENT TEACHING.
# Checklist of Responsibilities of Teacher Candidates

(Candidates will be evaluated by Classroom Teachers on this set of criteria)

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<tr>
<td>Punctual</td>
<td>Patient &amp; courteous</td>
<td>Sequential, well-planned lessons</td>
<td>Understands stages of child development</td>
<td>Understands curriculum structure at grade level</td>
<td>Adequate knowledge of content &amp; discipline</td>
<td>Ties lesson objectives to assessment &amp; outcomes</td>
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<td>Prepared/reliable</td>
<td>Considers diverse opinions</td>
<td>Speaks clearly/appropriate grammar</td>
<td>Recognizes diversity among students/ Families</td>
<td>Understands curriculum central concepts</td>
<td>Clear modulated speaking skills</td>
<td>Uses inquiry &amp; multiple instructional strategies</td>
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<td>Lessons planned</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Writes and spells accurately</td>
<td>Creates a safe learning environment for students</td>
<td>Engages students’ prior knowledge in new learning</td>
<td>Differentiated planning for diverse learners</td>
<td>Uses both formal &amp; informal assessments</td>
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<td>Consistent effort</td>
<td>Seeks &amp; accepts help when needed</td>
<td>Appropriate lesson plan format</td>
<td>Developing effective classroom management skills</td>
<td>Presents content accurately</td>
<td>Makes content meaningful for students</td>
<td>Lesson closure that assesses student learning</td>
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<td>Professionally Dressed</td>
<td>Responds positively to constructive criticism</td>
<td>Solves problems effectively</td>
<td>Developing effective motivational skills</td>
<td>Uses community resources when appropriate</td>
<td>Pacing &amp; timing of lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for others</td>
<td>Recognizes &amp; promotes diversity</td>
<td>Uses questioning techniques effectively</td>
<td>Sets goals for self and students</td>
<td>Makes content meaningful to students</td>
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<td>Enthusiastic about teaching</td>
<td>Flexibility in accepting change</td>
<td>Addresses problems &amp; concerns in professional manner</td>
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<td>Uses technology appropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Clear expectations for self and others</td>
<td>Engages in reflective practice &amp; professional growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborates with others</td>
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*Teaching as a profession requires special qualities and abilities as well as commitment.*
Steps in Lesson Planning for Teaching Assistantship Placements

**Step One:**
Become familiar with the “Required Lesson Plan Components” found on the next page in this Manual. If your Methods Instructor has not reviewed the components and structure of lesson planning with your Methods class prior to your first day of placement, please ask the Instructor to do this before you go to the school.

**Step Two:**
Once you have contacted the Classroom Teacher and met his/her class, begin to discuss the lesson(s) you will teach for the Classroom Teacher. Share the required “Niagara University Lesson Plan Format” with the Classroom Teacher. Discuss the time and length of the lesson. Discuss how your lesson fits with the Teacher’s lesson delivered prior to your lesson. Make sure you understand the purpose of the lesson and how it fits in the Grade’s curriculum. Offer to teach more than the required 2 lessons, if possible.

**Step Three:**
Prepare your lesson plan using the “Niagara University Lesson Plan Format” provided by your Methods Instructor. Provide the Classroom Teacher and your Methods Instructor with a copy of your lesson plan at least 2 days before you teach the lesson so that both the Classroom Teacher and Methods Instructor can provide you with feedback and suggestions. You are expected to work closely with both the Classroom Teacher and your Methods Instructor since your Assistantship hours and performance are required components of your Methods grade.

***

Keys to Success in Teaching Assistantships

Your responsibility is to prepare yourself as thoroughly as possible for Student Teaching by:
*Teaching as many lessons as possible during your Assistantship(s);

**Providing assistance/ tutoring individual students or small groups of students;

***Spending at least one full day in the classroom to have an overview of a full day of teaching in anticipation of Student Teaching.
REQUIRED LESSON PLAN COMPONENTS

Name: Date:
Title of Lesson: Time Estimate:
Class/Level: Number of Students:

ASK YOURSELF AS YOU PLAN LESSONS ~

Have I included all of the following components in my lesson plan?

Objectives:
- CCSS/OE (include performance indicators)
- District/school curriculum standards/expectations
- Identify expected student outcomes
- Identify essential question(s)

Rationale / Purpose of the Lesson:
- Relationship to past and future lessons, e.g., reference to Unit Plans
- Connection to students’ prior knowledge and relevance to their lives
- Real life/meaningful relevance to student experiences

Classroom/Behavior Management:
- Physical environment / floor plan
- Expectations of student behavior/classroom rules and consequences
- Classroom routines / materials management

Differentiation/Modifications:
- Accommodations for individual needs / learning styles
- Accommodations for student diversity
- Anticipated difficulties/ back up strategies

Resources/ Equipment/ Technology:
- Materials used for lesson, e.g., text books, supplies, suggested readings, technology resources
  (include web addresses), audio-visual equipment

Procedures/ Strategies/ Teaching Techniques:
- Sequence of activities (including anticipatory set at beginning / closure at end of lesson)
- Methods of instruction that encourage higher level thinking, appropriate social interaction and active engagement: (e.g., cooperative learning, discussion, role playing, modeling, guided practice, checking for understanding)
- Appropriate to intellectual, social and personal development of students, (e.g., use of appropriate/relevant examples and analogies; references to prior knowledge)
  Incorporates and encourages use of technology

Assessment of Student Learning:
- Formal and/or informal evidence of student learning
- Evidence of multiple assessments/related to objectives
- Documentation to support assessment, e.g., homework, test, portfolio

Reflection: What did I learn today in my teaching that I can improve upon?
Checklist of Responsibilities for Classroom Teachers

**Step One:**
Once you have decided you would like to become a Mentor Teacher for the Teaching Assistantship program, sign up on the NU Teaching Assistantship Form that has been sent to your Principal's Office at the beginning of each semester to recruit Mentor Teachers (See sample form on page __ in Manual). To sign up on the form: provide your name, email address, preference of 1, 2, or 3 candidates, your grade level and subjects taught (if middle or secondary school), your class room number, and days of the week and time(s) you would be willing to have a candidate in your classroom. Your Principal will submit the approved list to the Field Experience Office by the designated return date.

**Step Two:**
Within a few days, the teacher candidate will contact you, either by telephone or by email to (a) set a time to either come to your classroom to meet you, or, (b) to set up the schedule for the candidate's field experience hours in your classroom.

**Step Three:**
- Welcome the teacher candidate into your classroom.
- Discuss the makeup of your class and special needs with the candidate.
- Model teaching of several lessons for the candidate. Debrief your choice of lesson strategies and routines for classroom management with the candidate. Explain where you differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs.
- Discuss the lessons the candidate will be expected to teach. Determine the time and length of each lesson to be taught by the candidate. Discuss how the candidate's lesson plan fits with the lesson delivered prior to the candidate's teaching, and how it fits into the overall unit being taught. Ensure that the candidate understands the purpose of the lesson and how it fits in the grade's curriculum.
- Review the candidate's lesson prior to his/her teaching and provide constructive feedback based on the criteria in the “Checklist of Responsibilities of The Teacher Candidates” in this manual and on the Teaching Assistantship Assessment form.
- Discuss evidence of student learning, or lack thereof, as an outcome of the lesson taught by the candidate.
- If possible, provide opportunities for the candidate to teach more than two (2) lessons and to provide instructional support for as many individuals and small groups as time permits.
- At completion of the placement, complete the Teaching Assistantship Assessment of the candidate’s performance, and sign the Time Sheet to verify attendance. Retain the goldenrod sheet of the 4-part carbon copies for your records. Give the remaining completed forms to the candidate to return to the Field Experience Office.
- If possible, encourage the candidate to spend a full day in the classroom to become familiar with a full-day in the life of a teacher.

**Step Four:**

1. Complete the Teaching Assistantship Performance Assessment, signed documentation of hours on the Time Sheet to the candidate to return to the Field Experience Office and to the candidate's Methods Professor.
2. Complete the Mandatory Stipend Form
Niagara University Teaching Assistantship Program Performance Assessment

Teacher Candidate _____________________________  Student Number _______________________________

Name of School ______________________________ Name of Classroom Teacher ____________________

Grade/Age Level of Students ______________ NU Course Number/Section __________ Semester ____________

Rate the Teacher Candidate as follows: When given the opportunity to complete the requirements of the Teaching Assistantship placement, the teacher candidate’s performance per standard will be measured and evaluated based on one of the following:

**Satisfactory** - Teacher Candidate met the standard criteria in an acceptable/appropriate manner by displaying effectiveness on a consistent basis, as would be expected of someone prior to student teaching.

**Emerging** - Teacher Candidate showed progress toward meeting the standard criteria in an acceptable/appropriate manner, approaching readiness to student teach.

**Not Observable** - Teacher Candidate did not have an opportunity to display competency on the standard criteria.

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### The Learner and Learning

**InTASC Standard #1 Learner Development**
The teacher candidate understands how learners grow and develop, recognizes that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supports students; intellectual, social and personal development</td>
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</table>

**Evidence/Comments:**

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**InTASC Standard #2 Learning Differences**
The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draws on and values students’ backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applies interventions, modifications, and accommodations as required by legal requirements and district policy</td>
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**Overall Rating for Standard 2**

**Evidence/Comments:**

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**InTASC Standard #3 Learning Environments**
The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varies learning activities to support active student learning and develop a range of learner skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manages student behavior fairly and consistently</td>
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**Overall Rating for Standard 3**

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## Evidence/Comments:

### Content Knowledge

**InTASC Standard #4 Content Knowledge**
The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurately and effectively communicates concepts, processes, and knowledge in the discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses vocabulary and academic language that is clear, content-based and appropriate for students</td>
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**Overall Rating for Standard 4**

**Evidence/Comments:**

### Application of Content

**InTASC Standard #5 Application of Content**
The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages students in applying content knowledge and skills in authentic contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engages students in developing literacy and communications skills that support learning in the content area(s)</td>
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**Overall Rating for Standard 5**

**Evidence/Comments:**

### Instructional Practice

**InTASC Standard #6 Assessment**
The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher’s and learner’s decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses assessment strategies matching the method with the learning objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses evaluation methods that match assessment measures with learning objective(s)</td>
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**Overall Rating for Standard 6**

**Evidence/Comments:**

**InTASC Standard #7 Planning for Instruction**
The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepares written plans in a timely fashion for all lessons they are responsible for teaching</td>
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<td>Plans instruction that reflects district curriculum goals and applicable, rigorous learning standards (e.g. Next</td>
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### InTASC Standard #8 Instructional Strategies
The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses a variety of instructional strategies linked to learning objectives that engage students in active learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implements and manages instruction in ways that facilitate higher order thinking and critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills</td>
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### Overall Rating for Standard 8

### Evidence/Comments:

### InTASC Standard #9 Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates professional commitment and responsibility through:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• enthusiasm toward teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• compliance with education law and policy professional standards in appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• punctuality and preparation</td>
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<td>• maintenance of confidentiality, as appropriate</td>
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<td>• ethical, legal and professional use of technology</td>
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<td>Demonstrates critical thinking and reflective practice through:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• professionalism in addressing problems and concerns</td>
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<td>• a propensity to seek and accept help</td>
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<td>• a disposition toward reflective practice and ongoing professional growth</td>
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### Overall Rating for Standard 9

### Evidence/Comments:

### InTASC Standard #10 Leadership and Collaboration
The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

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<tr>
<th>The teacher candidate:</th>
<th>Not Observable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates professional relationships through:</td>
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### Overall Rating for Standard 10

### Evidence/Comments:
- high expectations for self and all students
- compassion toward all students
- patience and flexibility

Collaborates with peers and supports their development

**Overall Rating for Standard 10**

**Evidence/Comments:**

Signature of Classroom Teacher: _________________________________
Teacher Candidate: _____________________________________________
Date: ___________________________
Teaching Assistantship

Time Sheet

Student: ________________________________________________

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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Total Hours: ______

Teacher’s Signature: ____________________________________________

Note to Student:
It is YOUR responsibility to ensure that your Methods Instructor and the Office of Field Experience receives a copy of this form. One copy should also go in your portfolio.

*White – Field Experience Office * Yellow – Methods Instructor * Pink – Student * Goldenrod – TA Teacher
Candidate Reminders

Notes to Self

- Contact Supervising Teacher as soon as I sign-up for a placement(s) to introduce myself and confirm my placement.

- Inform my Methods Professor of my placement(s) and schedule.

- Find out what my Professor’s expectations and requirements are for completing my placement(s) successfully. Review the “Checklist of Responsibilities of Teacher Candidates on page __ in the Manual.

- Discuss lesson planning with both my Methods professor and Classroom Teacher.

- Discuss process for feedback for lesson plans and teaching of the lessons.

- If I am given the opportunity to teach more than the required two different lessons, I should take it. Two different lessons are a minimum. The more experience I get both in teaching an working with the students in Assistantship, the better prepared I will be for Student Teaching.

- If possible try to arrange to spend at least one full day in a classroom during the Assistantship placement(s). This is a suggestion and not mandatory. I will have a more realistic understanding of the expectations for teaching full days during Student Teaching if I have spent a full day in a classroom with a teacher prior to Student Teaching.

- Arrange for fingerprinting, and, if Canadian, also apply for a Vulnerable Sector Clearance Check.

- Submit documentation of hours completed and completed evaluation forms (white sheets of four-part carbon forms) to the Office of Field Experience, Academic Complex Room 222. Also submit the yellow-colored Timesheet and Assessment forms to my Methods Professor. My assistantship is part of my Methods course. If I do not complete the required paperwork I will be given an incomplete for the course and will not have fulfilled the requirements for entry into Student Teaching.

- Send a hand written note of thanks to my Mentor Teacher and his/her students.
Teacher Education Field Experience Office
Room 222, Academic Complex

Director
Mrs. Tracia McKissic
Telephone: 716-286-8739
Email: tlm@niagara.edu

Education Learn & Serve
Lil Maerten
Telephone: 716-286-8103
Email: edufieldexperience@niagara.edu

Teaching Assistantship
Lil Maerten, TA Assistant
Telephone: 716 286 8683
Email: lmaerten@niagara.edu

Student Teaching
Tracia McKissic
Telephone: 716 286 8739
tlm@niagara.edu