Working with a Marginal Intern

Though all interns face some difficulties during the internship, only a very few fit into the category of a “marginal” intern. Interns with serious problems need time, support and clear communication. Criticism and feedback must be made in a manner that allows the intern to take ownership of the problems and give them sufficient time to explore and practice corrective strategies. When it comes to the high-stakes decision about whether or not to recommend candidates for teaching licensure, clinical teachers and university supervisors are bound by the established levels of minimum competency. All who meet minimum standards will be recommended. - (Rudney and Guillaume, 2003)

Appropriate procedures must be implemented to monitor and accommodate a marginal intern including the following major components: identification of the problem(s), placement considerations, adjustments in conferences and observations, facilitation of intern self-reflection, crucial conversations, clear expectations with a time frame and placement on an improvement plan, and anecdotal recordkeeping. The information provided below is designed to provide more specific articulation of the expectations for supervision of the “marginal” intern.

Marginal Intern Improvement Plan

1. The university supervisor is to immediately notify the program area coordinator and the Office of Clinical Experiences or the Executive Director of Teacher Education when an intern does not appear to be progressing at a rate to allow for successful completion of the internship.

2. The clinical teacher and the university supervisor will document concerns in writing with examples of specific instances of difficulties.

3. The intern, clinical teacher and university supervisor will participate in a three-way conference to discuss the problems and concerns. Concrete documentation will be shared with the intern. Progress reports will specifically describe the areas in which the intern is not meeting standards and by what is expected to meet standards. Areas needing improvement should reflect an unsatisfactory rating of 1 on the progress report until such areas have been noted as improved and meeting satisfactory standards.

4. Information relevant for support of the intern will be sought from university records and professional personnel, including but not limited to his/her advisor, program area coordinator or former instructors.

5. If needed, the clinical teacher will assist the university supervisor to design an Improvement Plan that identifies specific standards not being met; clear expectations and specific strategies to be implemented, assessment method and criteria, resources needed, what is expected from the intern for improvement, date to re-visit the plan and the expected date of completion. The university supervisor will supply the original to the Office of Clinical Experiences, and copies to the Program Area Coordinator, the clinical teacher, and the intern.

6. The clinical teacher and the university supervisor will monitor the intern’s performance as outlined in the Improvement Plan (i.e. log of dates, times, places and situations and notes from: lesson plans, feedback from observations, conferences, telephone calls, written feedback signed by the intern, any other documents deemed appropriate).
7. The Program Area Coordinator may arrange for additional observations/evaluations by qualified individuals.

8. The clinical teacher and university supervisor may revise the long range plan and extend the internship if necessary to accommodate the situation with approval from the Office of Clinical Experiences or the Office of Teacher Education.

9. The clinical teacher and/or university supervisor will provide daily feedback to the intern regarding his/her progress toward reaching the goals of the Improvement Plan.

10. Possible outcomes from the steps above include:
   - Intern may adequately meet the requirements of the Improvement Plan
   - Intern may decide to withdraw from the internship
   - Intern’s progress may remain unsatisfactory and receive a C-, D, D-, or F for their internship and/or seminar grade.

The Improvement Plan can be found in the Teacher Education Handbook.

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SPECIAL NOTE

In working with marginal interns, the interests of both the intern and the university will be accommodated by:

- Involving the intern in the decision process
- Keeping extensive written documentation
- Showing evidence of proceeding in a timely manner
- Keeping all parties abreast of the situation
## Improvement Plan

ECU College of Education, Office of Clinical Experiences  
110 Speight, Greenville, NC 27858-4353

**Intern:** ____________________________  **Clinical Teacher:** ____________________________

**University Supervisor:** ____________________________  **Date:** ____________________________

Specific Concern(s)

### Plan for improvement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Required Actions (be very specific on what is expected)</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Assessment Method and Criteria (be very specific on the assessment method)</th>
<th>Evaluator(s)</th>
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Source: Adapted from Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers by Rudney and Guillaume.

**Signed and Dated:**

**University Supervisor** ____________________________  **Date** _________________

**Clinical Teacher** ____________________________  **Date** _________________

**Clinical Intern** ____________________________  **Date** _________________

Send copies to Program Area Coordinator, if appropriate, and the Office of Clinical Experiences as soon as the Improvement Plan is activated.