

## EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT UCSD'S CLASSROOM TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to allow a UCSD student to work with you and your students in your classroom. The purpose of this experience is to enable university students who work as classroom volunteers to learn about schools and the classroom environment prior to making a career decision about becoming a teacher. After one year of this pre-professional experience, the UCSD students then apply to a teaching credential program at which time they learn teaching methods and engage in supervised student teaching. So, keep in mind as you work with your UCSD student that they are not yet enrolled in methods classes nor are they student teachers. In the UCSD program, classroom teaching assistants (CTAs) are not formally supervised by UCSD staff.

The UCSD Teacher Education Program is composed of two phases, the pre-professional and the professional preparation components. "Classroom Teaching Assistant" is the title given to those UCSD students, mostly undergraduates, who are enrolled in the pre-professional program. These students are not yet in a credential program, but are spending this year volunteering in elementary school classrooms and completing their undergraduate education, taking courses in such topics as the sociology of schooling. Their placement in elementary school classrooms provides them with the opportunity to observe and interact with teachers and students in a genuine classroom environment. Your CTA has had one quarter of experience as PAL tutor or as an America Reads/Counts tutor. Thus, the CTAs will be completing the second of three volunteer experiences in your classroom this quarter. They will spend one or two days a week (for a total of a minimum of 35 hours over the 10-week quarter) in your classroom. We've listed on the other side of this paper student expectations and responsibilities in your classroom. While working in schools, the CTAs attend a UCSD course (TEP 128A) linked to their field experience.

If you have questions or comments about the UCSD program or CTA in your classroom, please feel free to get in touch with any of the UCSD staff listed below.

- For any questions about the course activities CTAs are expected to carry out in your classroom or with your students, or general questions about UCSD's Teacher Education Program call the instructor for TEP 128A:  
Cheryl Forbes      telephone number: 858-534-1686    email: cforbes@ucsd.edu.
- Several university teaching assistants lead discussion sections of TEP 128A and serve as liaisons to schools. The teaching assistant assigned to your school is:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Contact info:
- Our placement coordinator, Maryjane Chinn, can be reached at 858-534-7297. Her primary responsibility is coordinating the logistics of the placement.

## The Role of the Classroom Teaching Assistant

- To learn about the students, the classroom, the school, and the surrounding community;
- To observe and discuss with the cooperating teacher the classroom teaching and learning activities, and to participate in those activities by working with individual or small groups of students;
- To lead learning activities, under teacher direction, for groups of students or for the class as a whole; and
- To assist in the class 4-6 hours each week on a regularly scheduled basis, for the 10-week UCSD Quarter (total 35 hours minimum)

## The Role of the Cooperating Teacher

- To provide the CTA with basic information about the students, the classroom, the school site, and the community;
- As appropriate, to provide lesson plans which allow the CTA to work with small groups of children;
- To maintain regular communication with the CTA through informal talks at school, on the telephone, or via email; and
- To complete an evaluation of the classroom teaching assistant's performance.

We appreciate your participation in UCSD's Teacher Education Program.  
Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Forbes

Your CTA: Telephone number: Email address:
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