A. Professional and Unprofessional Teacher Behaviors

Judge the following scenarios involving a student teacher (ST) as demonstrating (1) professional behavior, (2) possibly questionable professional behavior, or (3) unprofessional behavior. Compare your rating with another student teacher before checking the answers that follow the exercise.

1. Denise (ST) verbally questions, in the presence of others, the ability of another student teacher assigned in the same placement classroom when he plans a very rigorous and exciting sports activity.

2. Marla (ST), though upset, accepts her cooperating teacher's negative evaluation of her handling of a child who bites other children.

3. Kenton (ST) labors over class assignment until he has it as close to what he feels to be perfect as possible.

4. Emma (ST) appears to avoid certain children, but develops quick rapport with others.

5. Paula (ST) ignores maintenance personnel and is unsure if she should interact with them in the same way she interacts with other teachers.

6. Tynisha (ST) has set up a signal with her cooperating teacher to use when she wants immediate help. Raoul, a four-year-old, has just kicked Tynisha, after she tells him to put a ball outside the classroom door. Tynisha signals the cooperating teacher.

7. Billy-Jean (ST) has just told Ryan (a child) who is spitting on Cody (a child) that this is unacceptable behavior. She has her arm around Cody who is crying. Billy-Jean also tells Ryan that his behavior has made her feel angry.

8. Reggie's parents have invited Winette (ST) to their child's birthday celebration at their home, and have not extended the invitation to other classroom teachers. Winette sends a note to the parents, to thank them and express regret that she cannot attend; she avoids mentioning the invitation to others. She plans to talk with staff to find out if some recognition of Reggie's birthday is planned at school, and investigates the program's policy concerning personal relationships with families.

9. Luanne (ST) complained frequently to other student teachers about her unfortunate assignment at a school that was a rather long distance from the campus. She mentioned that the other student teachers had closer assignments and spent much less on gasoline. Other student teachers commented about the quality of Luanne's well-known and widely recognized program but Luanne still could not view her assignment in a positive manner.

10. Jennings (ST) completes his cooperating teacher's assigned tasks in a timely fashion by using his own system, which identifies upcoming deadlines. He rarely has to rush at the last minute to complete coursework.

11. Leticia (ST) has boyfriends that call the child development center wanting to leave messages or speak to her while she is working. At times, they drop by the reception area to inquire after her or wait for her. Although the center has rules about this, Leticia does not seem interested in changing the situation but rather is flattered by her boyfriends' attention.

12. Serena (ST) cleans and straightens room areas and equipment that Roberta, her co-student teacher, leaves untidy. Serena decides to communicate how she feels about continuing to do so. When Roberta fails to clean used paint and brushes in the sink, she asks Roberta if they can chat privately.
13. While working on a joint assignment with three other student teachers, Anna (ST) offers ideas. Although she feels occasional ideas offered by the others (STs) are “off the wall,” she listens closely and considers them seriously. She tries to hear everyone’s viewpoint and works toward an agreement about how the group will complete the assignment.

14. During her student teaching assignment, Barbara (ST) directs parent volunteers, sometimes takes over the full responsibilities of the cooperating teacher’s classroom while her cooperating teacher serves as an aide, plans and presents an evening program for families, helps the cook prepare child snacks, instructs visiting adults on the use of classroom equipment, and interacts playfully with children; in all of these roles, she performs with skill.

15. Meg (ST) and Maria (ST) chat about their cooperating teachers and wonder how one can afford a Porsche and the other, a single woman, can adopt a child.

**ANSWERS**

1. (3) Denise should respect the abilities of other student teachers. The activity was in a planning stage and perhaps the other student teacher’s plan contained features or contingencies that Denise knew nothing about.

2. (1) Professional behavior. Student teachers accept what they perceive to be negative and/or positive comments realizing both may promote teaching growth.

3. (1) High standards are commendable.

4. (2) Uncertain may be the best answer and one should reflect on the possible reasons behind Emma’s behavior. Are these avoided children hard to approach? Is Emma trying to interact though she has been in the program only a short period? Professional behavior displays an attempt to build rapport with all attending children.

5. (3) Unprofessional behavior.

6. (3) Unprofessional behavior. Tynisha has not made any attempt to solve the problem herself. If the situation escalates, or Tynisha has tried to handle Raoul without success, then asking for help is more appropriate.

7. (1) Professional behavior includes displaying appropriate teacher emotions, in this case, most teachers may feel some anger.

8. (1) Professional behavior. Winette avoids discussing the invitation because it has excluded other classroom teachers, and responds in written form to the invitation.

9. (3) A professional demonstrates enthusiasm and a positive attitude whenever possible.

10. (1) Organizing and planning ahead is typical professional behavior.

11. (3) Professionals follow rules, procedures, quality standards, and guidelines and thoughtfully consider their actions and take responsibility for them.

12. (1) Communicating directly to the person involved is professional behavior.

13. (1) Professionals remain open minded and probe for each participant’s ideas and their expression of individual viewpoints in team efforts.

14. (1) Professionals are able to shift classroom roles easily and become leaders, followers, and active participants with children and families.

15. (3) Gossiping reflects immature interpersonal skills.