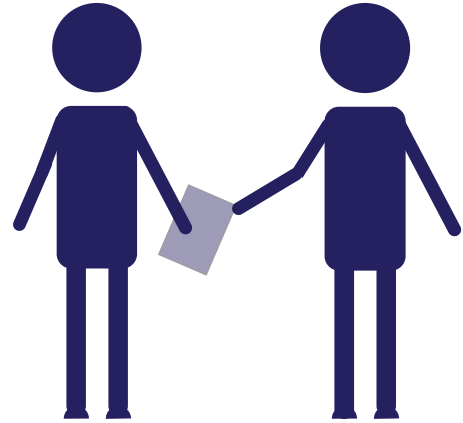


MENTOR GUIDEBOOK

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“Colleagues are a wonderful thing – but mentors, that’s where the real work gets done.” — Junot Diaz

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Think Back to Your First Year

Do you remember your first year as an educator? Do you really remember? You are a spectacular teacher now, but take a moment to reminisce about the challenges associated with your first year. Do you remember having to prepare for multiple preps? Do you remember lugging boxes of student papers to your car that needed to be graded? Do you remember the first phone call that you ever had to make to a parent? You can probably remember every difficult moment that you encountered as a novice teacher. Since your first year, you have developed your own strategies and skills to use in tackling such issues. As a veteran teacher, you have faced your share of challenges and successes that are common in this profession.

The first-year teachers in our district are experiencing some of those exact challenges. By sharing these experiences with your mentee, they learn that problems are normal. Novice teachers are embarking on a new journey, in which they will experience highs and lows, success and failures, and joys and woes. The support provided by a mentor will potentially encourage the new teacher to further his/her professional commitment to the teaching profession, to perform at a high-performance level, and to build his or her self-efficacy.

As a mentor, it is your role to serve as a supporter and role model for the new teacher. Mentoring a new teacher gives you the opportunity to establish a relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and collegiality. It also provides you with the added bonus of a shared learning experience.

Why Mentor?

Mentor teachers can provide valuable insight and guidance to new teachers. Due to your experience, patience, and knowledge, you have been hand-selected by your campus administration to embark on this journey. You have been chosen because you understand that new teachers need support in adjusting to the fast and challenging environment from the first day of school, until they gradually find their own styles of teaching.

Structure of the Guidebook

This guidebook is to meant to serve as a resource for you and your mentee's journey throughout the academic school year. It is organized in the following manner: **Part I** - Addresses the basic components of mentoring, such as mentor qualities and responsibilities. Establishing relationships and communicating with your mentee are also topics that are addressed.

Part II - Tackles the often complex task of observing teachers and providing non-evaluative feedback. This section offers tips about observation protocols and framing your feedback.

Part III - Addresses the possible pitfalls of mentoring. This section provides solutions for overcoming obstacles during the mentoring journey.

PART I: Introduction to Mentoring

Program Overview

The Teacher Induction Plan and the Teacher Mentor Program are integral components of a teacher's first year experience. Through the Dallas ISD Teacher Mentor Program, new/novice teachers are strategically partnered with a highly skilled veteran teacher for enhanced acclimation, increased retention, and amplified teacher effectiveness while cultivating leadership potential in veteran teachers serving as mentors.

At the campus level, the mentoring program seeks to establish a protected and supportive space in which a novice teacher can interact to discuss best practices and develop instructional skills.

Program Goals

- 1** Partner new and novice teachers with capable mentors to provide differentiated support at the campus level.
- 2** Diversify instructional skills of new/novice teachers to ensure student success.
- 3** Enhance professional attitudes toward teaching and the teaching profession.
- 4** Cultivate leadership potential in veteran teachers serving as mentors.
- 5** Provide mentor teachers with research-based peer coaching training.

Program Responsibilities

	Responsibilities of New/Novice Teacher		Responsibilities of Mentor	
	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2018	Spring 2019
Novice Teachers and Alternative Certification Interns*	Action: Mentee completes the 1 st Six-Weeks Needs Assessment Survey [§] Timeline: September 2018	Action: Mentee completes Mid-Year Needs Assessment Timeline: December/January 2018-2019	Action: Mentor conducts 1 st Observation & Feedback session on New Teacher Timeline: Sept. - Nov. (recorded via Google link [∞] Nov. 30, 2018)	Action: Mentor conducts 3 rd Observation & Feedback session on New Teacher Timeline: Feb. - May (recorded via Google link [∞] May 24, 2018)
	Action: Mentee conducts an Observation & Feedback session on mentor teacher Timeline: November 2018	Action: Mentee conducts an Observation & Feedback session on mentor teacher Timeline: March 2019	Action: Mentor conducts 2 nd Observation & Feedback session on New Teacher Timeline: (recorded via Google link [∞] Nov. 30, 2018)	Action: Mentor conducts 4 th Observation & Feedback session on New Teacher Timeline: Feb. - May (recorded via Google link [∞] May 24, 2018)
			Action: Complete Mid-Year Mentor Feedback Survey [§] Timeline: Dec. 17, 2018	Action: Complete End-of-Year Mentor Feedback Survey [§] Timeline: May 24, 2019
	Monthly Informal Mentor/Mentee Meetings			
Teachers New to the District[◇]	Action: Mentee completes the 1 st Six-Weeks Needs Assessment Survey [§] Timeline: September 2018	Action: Mentee completes Mid-Year Needs Assessment Timeline: December/January 2018-2019	Assignment of mentor and/or instructional coach support as determined by individual campus need.	

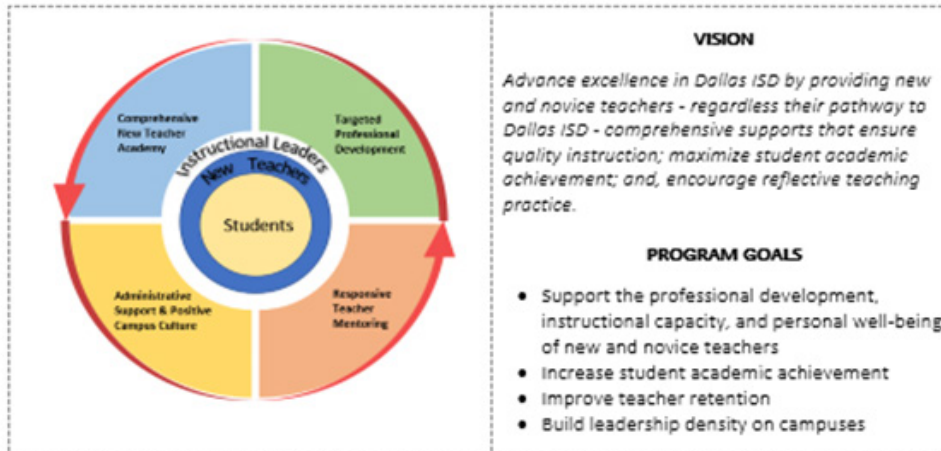
* Note: various Alternative Certification programs may have additional requirements for interns

§ Surveys will be administered electronically via the Onboarding and Retention Team

◇ Campus and teacher needs will vary; therefore, some Teachers New to the District may be asked to participate in the Novice teacher mentoring program activities.

∞ a Google link will be provided in September 2018

DALLAS ISD: NEW AND NOVICE TEACHER INDUCTION PLAN



NEW TEACHER ACADEMY	
Goals	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the four Student Achievement Goals, the district's philosophies, and Teacher Excellence Initiative • Introduce district instructional priorities through practice-intense professional learning • Familiarize new and novice teachers with district resources to support personal and professional growth 	August 6-8, 2018
TARGETED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Goals	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide timely, targeted professional learning opportunities grounded in the TEI performance rubric • Utilize professional development sessions offered by Teaching and Learning to share content-specific resources and instructional strategies for first year teachers 	September 2018 – May 2019
TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM	
Goals	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner novice and new teachers with capable mentors to provide differentiated supports at the campus level • Diversify instructional skills of new/novice teachers to ensure student success • Enhance professional attitudes toward teaching and the teaching profession • Cultivate leadership potential in veteran teachers serving as mentors • Provide mentor teachers with research-based peer coaching training 	June 2018 – May 2019
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND POSITIVE CAMPUS CULTURE	
Goals	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a New Teacher Support Liaison (NTSL) to consistently provide support • Cultivate teacher collaboration through targeted school-wide learning opportunities, reciprocal observations, job-embedded coaching, and PLCs • Provide supportive structures for teaching and learning that include opportunity for mentor/mentee interaction • Utilize a comprehensive observation cycle and responsive feedback to facilitate teacher growth 	August 2018 – June 2019

Timeline of Mentor Yearly Responsibilities

At times, the task of mentoring can appear somewhat daunting. You want to ensure that you are meeting the needs of your mentee as well as meeting the various district and campus deadlines. The chart below includes a timeline of responsibilities and deadlines.

Month	Mentor Responsibilities and Suggested Best Practice * indicates a required activity ** indicates a highly recommended activity
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information about orientation from your principal • Contact new teachers as soon as possible, and meet with them during orientation. Take advantage of New Teacher Academy campus days. • Orient teachers to the campus. Show teachers their rooms and assist with setup, if possible • Identify concerns that your mentee may have and respond accordingly • Explain the PLC processes and curriculum • Provide an overview of district and campus procedures and policies
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with new teacher to determine whether they are overwhelmed and support as needed • Support new teacher with understanding TEKS and TEI evaluation system • Prepare your new teachers to receive spot observations and walk-throughs • Help new teacher develop SLO (student learning objective) and PDP (professional development plan)* • Participate in lesson planning with your mentee • Attend an extracurricular activity with your mentee • Talk to mentee about communicating with parents • Talk to mentee about the grading policies and keeping students updated on their progress • Attend offered mentor training session**
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to new teachers about work/life balance • Schedule a lunch with your mentee • Review available professional development opportunities with your mentee • Help your mentee with six weeks assessments and analyzing data • Help your mentee understand how to plan interventions for student performance • Schedule reciprocal observations with your mentee, and input the observations into the google tracking system* • Prepare your mentee for parent conference
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build your skills as a mentor • Remind mentees to review their systems for classroom management, • Remind your mentor that the upcoming breaks are times to rejuvenate and reflect
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule follow up observations with your mentee, and input the observations into the google tracking system* • Monitor new teachers for fatigue and disillusionment • Help new teacher prepare for ACP (Assessment of Course Performance) testing • Guide new teachers with adhering to policies regarding holiday celebrations and decorations • Advise your mentee to take the Christmas break to rejuvenate and reflect

Timeline of Mentor Yearly Responsibilities Continued

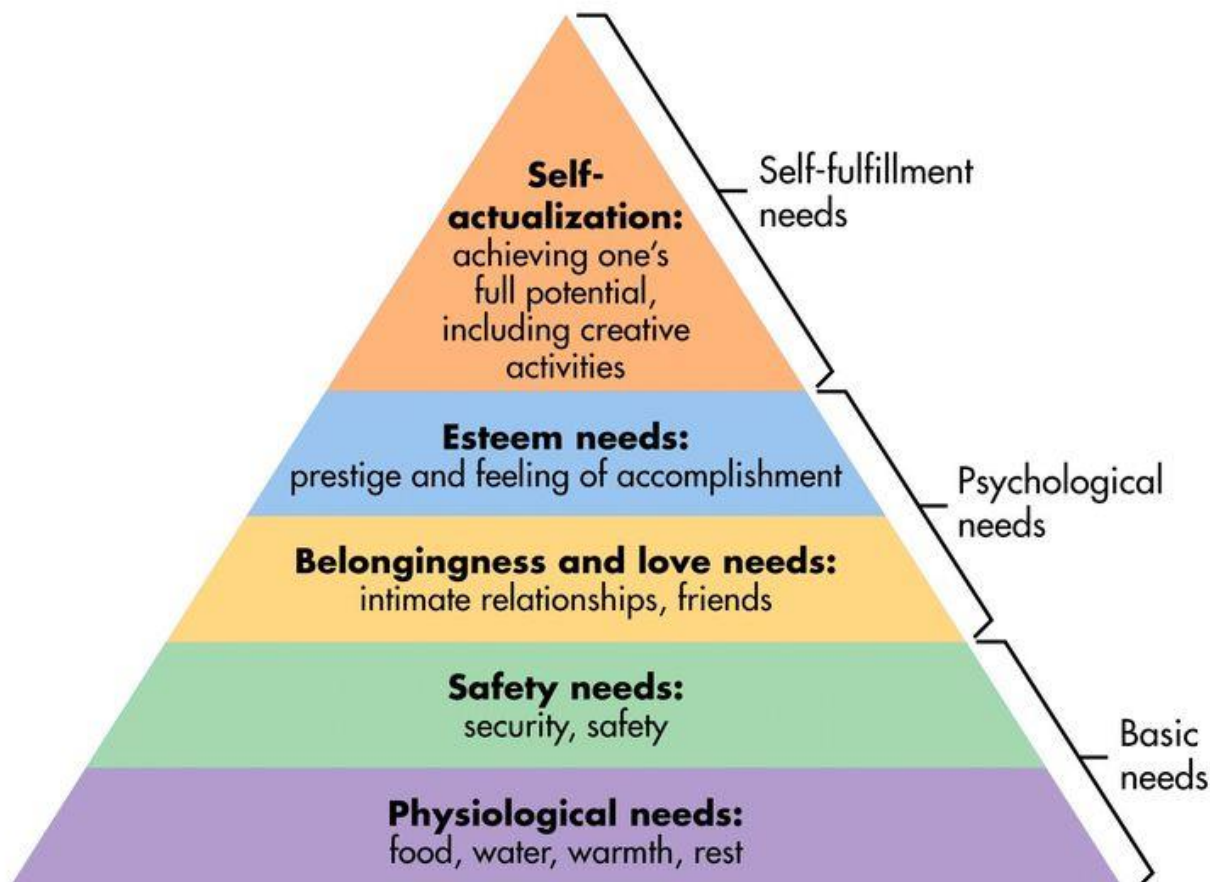
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your mentee think of ways to reset expectations if necessary • Assist your mentee with interpreting ACP data and goal setting • Continue to attend mentor training sessions • Help new teachers to understand learning goals for the semester and state testing expectations • Begin preparing new teachers for extended observations
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, review professionalism and policies • Check with mentees about how to check for understanding and providing interventions • Continue to support the emotional and social needs of your mentees by being available to converse about their needs • Help mentees with managing tutoring schedules for test preparation tutoring (i.e. Saturday School) • Continue preparing new teachers for extended observations • Attend offered mentor training session**
March and April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate Spring Break with your mentee • Help prepare teachers for STAAR testing and to understand the magnitude of their efforts in providing quality instruction • Help mentees to reflect on the concepts that need to be revisited • Schedule reciprocal observations with your mentee, and input the observations into the google tracking system* • Help new teachers to begin preparing to work on SLO accomplishment* • Continue preparing new teachers for extended and summative observations
May and June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist your mentee with identifying growth areas and professional development sessions to attend during the Summer (The new teachers will need to complete PDP)* • Schedule follow up observations with your mentee, and input the observations into the google tracking system* • Help new teachers to finalize their SLO accomplishment* • Help new teachers develop end of the year assignments and lessons that are meaningful and help sharpen skills that students will need for the next school year • Involve your new teacher in planning for graduation, prom and awards assemblies • Help new teachers reflect and begin to plan for next year • Help new teachers with packing up their rooms

Relationship Building and Trust

The mentor and mentee relationship is one in which both parties learn from each other. As the mentor, you are constantly monitoring mentee progress, accessing needs and facilitating conversations about student achievement and mentee improvement. In order to make this relationship successful, there must be a level of trust and vulnerability. Trust and vulnerability are important because as a mentor, you are considered to be a friend, a guide and a coach who will help the new teacher navigate through his or her first year.

It is also helpful to understand that any mentoring relationship will change over time, and needs will shift during the relationship. However, one thing is fundamental of an effective mentor, and that is a belief in the potential of your mentee.

In order to be the supportive mentor that your new teacher needs, you must first understand his or her needs. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (illustrated in the graphic below) can also be useful when considering your approach to supporting new teachers.



*Taken from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

According to Breaux and Wong (2003), a new teacher’s physiological needs and safety are more logistical and operational. For example, a new teacher wants to know where the restrooms are, the procedures for lunch, the contact person for benefits, etc. A new teacher’s safety needs may be as simple as where to find safe parking and who should be called for help. As we move up the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs pyramid, the new teacher’s needs become more connected to social and emotional well-being. Often, new teachers can feel overwhelmed and isolated, so the mentor will need to pay special attention to the new teacher’s need for love, belonging and esteem. A major mentoring responsibility is embracing the new teachers and ensuring that they are included in the school’s activities and culture. It is especially important to express that the new teacher’s hard work is not going unnoticed. Also, you must help the teacher to understand the “unwritten” rules of the campus. Finally, in the self-actualization phase, new teachers begin to reflect about their accomplishments, student achievement and goal setting for the future. Help your mentee by highlighting their successes and celebrating small wins.

It’s important to remember that new teachers are adult learners, and as the mentor, you are the teacher. However, as you build relationships and mentor the new teachers, remember that adult learners are different. Be very careful not to patronize them. Always value their thoughts and opinions. For more information about how to interact specifically with adult learners, view the chart below: (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/teaching-adults-what-every-trainer-needs-know-adult-bruce-d->)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHILDREN AND ADULT LEARNERS

CHILDREN	ADULTS
Rely on others to decide what is important to be learned	Decide for themselves what is important to be learned
Accept the information being presented at face value	Need to validate information based on their beliefs and experiences
Expect what they are learning to be useful in their long-term future	Expect what they are learning to be immediately useful
Have little or no experience upon which to draw - are relatively "clean slates"	Have much experience upon which to draw - may have fixed view points
Little ability to serve as knowledgeable resource to teacher or fellow classmates	Significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to trainer and fellow learners

* Taken from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/teaching-adults-what-every-trainer-needs-know-adult-bruce-d->

There will be times when you must meet your mentees' physiological needs before you can address their instructional needs, as demonstrated in *The Tale of the Spoon*



The Tale of the Spoon

Closing the Achievement Gap One Utensil at a Time

As told by Torrie Mekos, communications specialist for educator effectiveness

My first year of teaching, I met my friend Emily. We were both fresh out of college and had just moved 800 miles from our respective homes to begin our teaching careers. Together, we went through typical first-year teacher experiences: We mourned the loss of our personal lives. We called our dads to express disbelief when we received our first paychecks, convinced there must have been some sort of accounting error. We commiserated about day-to-day stressors in our classrooms, schools and profession.

Early in the school year, Emily was meeting with our mentor. Emily and I both worked at low-income schools, where closing the achievement gap was issue No. 1. We were surrounded by a sense of urgency to learn "best practices" for everything from assessing students' reading levels to casually preventing anarchy in the boys' bathroom.

Our mentor was giving Emily feedback about behavior management and sharing ideas for an upcoming vocabulary lesson when Emily interrupted with spontaneous sobbing. She hadn't been focusing on any of the well-meaning feedback that our mentor was providing. In the rush of graduating, moving and starting new jobs, Emily and her roommate hadn't really had time to make their apartment a home. They hadn't even had a chance to buy essentials like beds or silverware.

Then Emily confessed something. For every single meal they had consumed since earning the title "teacher," Emily and her roommate had been sharing a **single, disposable plastic spoon**. *Cue stock 1950s horror movie screaming*. They simply washed it between meals and passed it back and forth.

Our mentor immediately ended the session, drove Emily to her house and gave her some of her own silverware.

Now that Emily and I are older, wiser and (maybe) more well-adjusted, we look back on this and laugh. Despite how ridiculous it seems now, it illustrates how there truly is a Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for teachers. Sure, teachers don't enter the profession seeking money and fame — but they aren't martyrs either. New teachers need to hear that striving for a work-life balance (or simply a spoon) doesn't make them unprofessional or uncommitted to their students' success. Making sure that new teachers have spoons may not directly improve instruction, but personal and professional well-being are closely linked. If districts, schools and mentors aren't intentional about recognizing this connection, their efforts to help new teachers deliver good instruction will be futile.

In other words, if you don't pay attention to it and give it some TLC, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is capable of eating Bloom's Taxonomy for lunch!



Mekos, T.(2018, February) *Thetales of the spoon*. Retrieved from <https://www.sreb.org/spoon>

Role of a Mentor

The mentor-mentee relationship is one of the most crucial factors in developing new teachers and ultimately retaining them. It is in these first years that new teachers set the foundation for their instructional practice and learn the professionalism needed to succeed within a large public school district. The role of a mentor is to help these new teachers make sense of their new responsibilities, support new teachers' development, and turn new teachers into informed decision makers.



Perhaps the most important factors for a successful mentor-mentee relationship are trust and confidentiality. These two factors will allow mentees to be honest about the difficulties they are experiencing and to openly engage with their mentors. This can be achieved by creating a non-judgmental atmosphere that places the mentor in the role of 'listener.' This will also let the mentee drive the conversation and allow mentors to ask guided reflection questions that promote teacher development.

Another challenge facing mentees is the non-instructional responsibilities associated with teaching. The many procedures and protocols, in combination with classroom management, can seem impossible to navigate for new teachers. The role of the mentor is to help make sense of these many components and break them down into manageable clusters of information. Mentors need to make sure to communicate with mentees about school deadlines and district procedures and carve out time to assist new teachers with completing these tasks. This will undoubtedly relieve some of the stress that new teachers feel and fortify the mentor-mentee relationship.

In addition to the above techniques, mentors can take additional steps to alleviate some of the stress for mentees. An easy way to accomplish this is to allocate time to introduce the mentee to the school staff. Mentees will of course know some of the administrative staff, but mentors should also introduce mentees to other faculty and support staff. Not only will this help create a welcoming environment, it will also promote independence for mentees and allow them to have multiple points of contact.

The importance of the mentor-mentee relationship cannot be overstated. Mentors play an enormous role in the development and retention of quality teachers and their dedication to helping new teachers directly impacts the students. In summary, mentors should:

- Create a relationship built on trust and confidentiality
- Actively listen and use guided reflection questions to develop mentees
- Formally assist mentees with district and school protocols and procedures
- Introduce mentees to school staff

Sample Guided Reflection Questions:

- In what areas do you think you succeeded in your lesson? Why?
- In what areas do you think you could have improved your lesson? Why?
- What might you do differently to address the areas of improvement?
- How do you know students were successful in their learning?
- What data can you use to assess student mastery?
- How do you currently manage your time?
- What support would be helpful in making you feel more successful?

Qualities of an Effective Mentor

Effective mentors do not take their responsibility lightly. They feel invested in the success of their mentee. Usually, this requires someone who is knowledgeable, compassionate, and possesses the attributes of a good trainer of adults. An effective mentor is committed to helping their mentee find success and gratification in the education profession. Overall good mentoring requires empowering your mentee to develop his/her own strengths, beliefs, and personal attributes it takes to become a successful educator. Remember, mentoring is about transferring information, demonstrating competence, and providing a meaningful experience to your mentee. By sharing your professional knowledge and expertise, you are demonstrating the specific behaviors and actions that your mentee will need to acquire to grow and develop.

Breakdown of Responsibilities

At the beginning of the year, mentors and mentees must complete the Mentor Registration Google Form. The link to this form will be provided to you by your campus New Teacher Support Liaison. This form collects information on your mentor/mentee pairing, your campus and your feeder pattern. Mentors also need to complete the Observation Google Form any time they complete an observation of their mentee. The link to this form will also be provided by your campus New Teacher Support Liaison. And the form can be found on our website at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/38154>.

As a mentor, it is your responsibility to make time to meet with your mentee. This will ensure that you and your mentee are up-to-date with your tasks and are actively working together to develop the skills of your mentee. Remember that a major component of the mentor/mentee relationship is confidentiality, so use these face-to-face meetings as ways to engage with your mentee about areas of growth and solutions to overcome problems encountered in the classroom.

Mentors should also advise mentees on upcoming deadlines and campus/district policies. Tasks can stack up, especially at the beginning and end of the six weeks, so take time to make sure your mentee is up-to-date and in compliance with policies. Make sure to schedule time to show your mentee how to complete these tasks and be available to answer any questions they may have.

Part II: Mentoring to Impact Practice Through Observation and

Mentor Observation of Mentee

Observations are a major component of the mentoring process. Observations give the mentor an opportunity to assess the many components of a new teacher's instructional practice and an opportunity to give feedback to the mentee. Though observations may seem straightforward, there are best practices when conducting observations to ensure your mentee feels supported and sees observations as a learning mechanism to help in their development.



Before Your Observation

Being observed can be a stressful endeavor for your mentee and can sometimes inhibit the intended benefits of observations. Make sure you keep this in mind when planning your observations and use strategies to reduce the stress levels before you observe. To increase your mentee's comfort level, make your first visit to your mentee's classroom very informal and non-evaluative (Porter, 2008). This will help your mentee and their students get acclimated to your presence. Don't take any notes and resist the urge to give any feedback at this point. Before you observe your mentee, make sure to schedule time to meet beforehand. This will allow you to discuss with your mentee the lesson objectives and gain a better understanding of your mentee's lesson planning and preparation. You can also explain to your mentee what techniques you will be focusing on and how you will be gathering information during the observation. Pre-observation conversations prepare your mentee for your presence and upcoming feedback.

During Observation

Make sure to look for student learning during the lesson, and then look for factors that enhance or impede student learning. This will help you when collecting information to share with your mentee. It is also good practice to pull at least two positive components of your mentee's lesson to share with them.

Post-Observation

Make sure that you have a time scheduled to debrief with your mentee about their lesson. The closer it can be to the completion of the lesson, the better. This will allow for better recall of the events and will also help with connecting action steps to some weaknesses you identified. Make sure that you are delivering any criticisms constructively. Remember that you are not the evaluator, and ALL feedback should be given in a non-evaluative manner. Make sure to identify instructional areas that you would like your mentee to focus on during the reciprocal observation. By this point, you should also have an idea about how your mentee responds to feedback, so make sure that you keep this in mind. Lastly, make sure to highlight any positive attributes you observed your mentee do during the lesson and end your debrief on a positive note and with next steps. For a sample Debrief Conversation Form, see Appendix C.

Mentee Observation of Mentor

After you have observed your mentee and had the post-observation conference, you will need to schedule a time for your mentee to observe you teach. Reciprocal observations allow you to identify and highlight best practices and strategies that your mentee can adopt. Be sure to highlight strategies that will positively impact your mentee's growth areas. The process of watching a veteran teacher employ a wide variety of sound teaching practices is invaluable to the development of a new teacher. Make sure to debrief after your mentee observes your teaching. Be sure to ask the probing questions during the debrief session. Reciprocal observations help develop your mentee's instructional skills and give them a first-hand account of quality instructional practice.

Effective Communication in Your Role as Mentor

"Communication is a process of sharing experience until it becomes a common possession. It modifies the disposition of both parties who partake in it." - John Dewey

In your role as mentor, one of the most important skills you can assist your mentee with is the development of effective and efficient professional communication skills. Before mentoring someone else on communication skills and techniques, you should consider reflecting on your own strengths and weaknesses so that you can: 1) share from a place of humility and authenticity and 2) work alongside your mentee as a peer to continue developing your own communication skills.

A good communication resource to review and share with your mentee is Don Miguel Ruiz's The Four Agreements.

THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

1. BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD
Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.

2. DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY
Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinion and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

3. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS
Find the courage to ask questions and express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST
Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.

-Miguel Ruiz
www.miguelruiz.com

Framing the work relationship of mentor and mentee in a space of openness and non-judgment will demonstrate to your mentee that your role is to support and guide rather than to evaluate or judge. It is important for you to explicitly communicate to your mentee that mentoring is a separate role from school administrator or coach (See page 17 for Role of a Mentor).

Communication Guidance

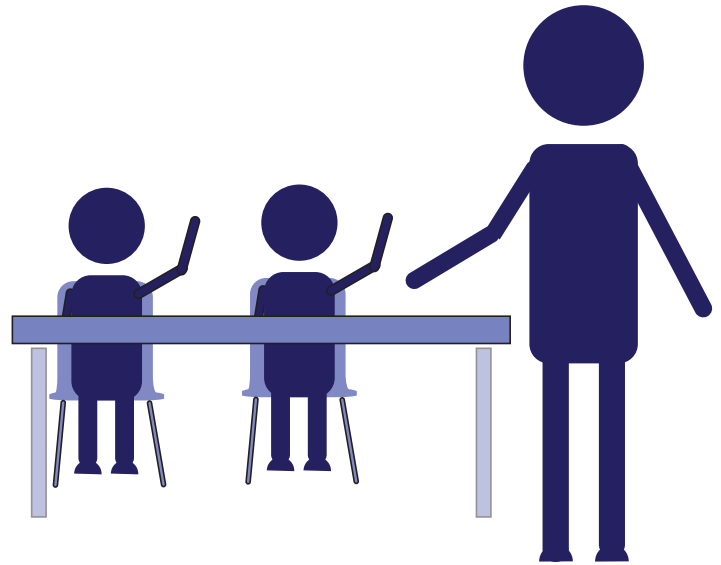
Effective Communication is one of the key characteristics of an effective mentor. Colorado State University Global Campus' Official Blog shares five relevant "Tips for Developing your Communication Skills" which relate to the role of mentor teacher:

1. **Listen:** Communication isn't all just about you doing the talking. A great deal of communication involves you listening to other people. One mistake people make is that when someone else is talking they tend to only be thinking about what they want to say when it's their turn to talk again, and therefore, they are not fully listening to what is being said to them. That is when key information is missed.
2. **Pay Attention to What You Are Saying Without Saying It:** Here's another great example of how communication is not just about talking. A great deal of it is not done verbally. We communicate so much just with the expression on our faces, the gestures we make, and the way that we stand or sit. When interacting with others, always put your best self forward. Make direct eye contact, stand tall or sit up straight, and give firm handshakes.
3. **Know Your Audience:** Have you ever taken notice as to what communication method provides you with the best response? Figure out how your coworkers like to receive information, you'll find things move along more smoothly.
4. **Remember The Message Sent Isn't Always The Message Received:** Everyone is their own filter, and not everything comes out how we intend it. Many negative situations can arise from making incorrect assumptions, especially in an email or a text message. In these situations, we often find ourselves determining a tone of voice when there is none. Take a step back and ask for clarification face-to-face if you need to so you don't end up making something out of nothing.
5. **Get to the Point:** Just as you are probably extremely busy with your daily tasks, so are your colleagues. Sometimes a little more background information is needed; other times, it isn't. Make sure you are clear in your expectations and you will see results. In addition to being direct, keep tips 3 and 4 in mind with this one. Some people might appreciate a little more small talk or respond better with a change in tone.

Full text of the article can be found here: <https://csuglobal.edu/blog/make-indispensable-5-workplace-communication-strategies>

Managing Expectations

As you begin working with your new/novice teacher, it will be crucial to communicate using the channels, frequency, and tone that will work for you and your mentee. This means that you need to ask how your mentee is most comfortable communicating with you. Does your mentee want to drop by in person? Does your mentee want your cell phone number? How often would your mentee like access to you (daily, intermittent throughout the week? Is there an expectation that you as mentor are available on evenings/weekends?) How is your mentee most receptive to feedback (gentle suggestions, “tough love,” in writing, etc.)? If there are discrepancies between your preferences and those of your mentee, have that conversation early so you can proactively manage expectations.



Positive Presuppositions - Presuming Positive Intentions

- Use positive presuppositions that presume a person has capacity, positive intention, desire, and prior and ongoing consideration.
- Honor the speaker by demonstrating belief or trust in the speaker.
- Model acceptance and respect.

Examples	Non-Examples
As you examine the data, what are some of your findings?	Did you look at the data?
When you think about your students' needs, what strategies might be most appropriate?	Do you know what your students need?
While you monitor student learning, what are some indicators of success you look for?	Are you planning to assess student learning in this lesson?
In considering multiple instructional strategies, how did you decide cooperative learning was the best for this lesson?	Did you think cooperative learning was the best strategy for this lesson?

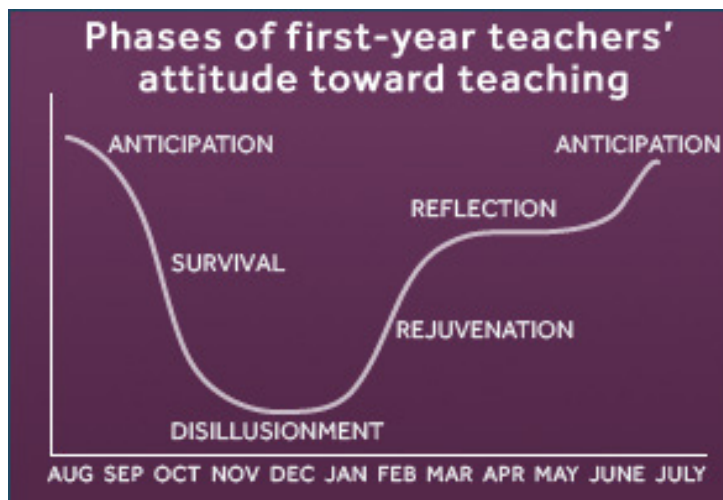
(Taken from National Staff Development Council Coaches' Academy training resources for Dallas ISD, now Learning Forward <https://learningforward.org/>)

Part III: Mentoring Pitfalls and Solutions

Potential Challenges for Mentors

There are many challenges that mentors face over the course of a school year. The responsibilities that come with teaching combined with assisting new and novice teachers can be overwhelming. The best way to cope with these additional responsibilities is to be aware of the challenges involved with mentoring and form processes to overcome them. Understanding this will allow you to forge effective relationships with your mentees and ultimately enrich their development.

One of the biggest challenges for mentors is time management. There are numerous responsibilities that teachers face and adding the additional role of mentor can seem immense. One of the best ways to cope with the additional stress is to make sure you have a plan in place and are aware of times of the year when tasks tend to stack up. Meet with your mentee and plan out your meetings for the month or semester in advance. Make sure to identify times of the year when your mentee will also require more attention. This will help you make sure you still have enough time to complete your own obligations.



*Taken from www.jntp.org/blog/phases-first-year-teaching

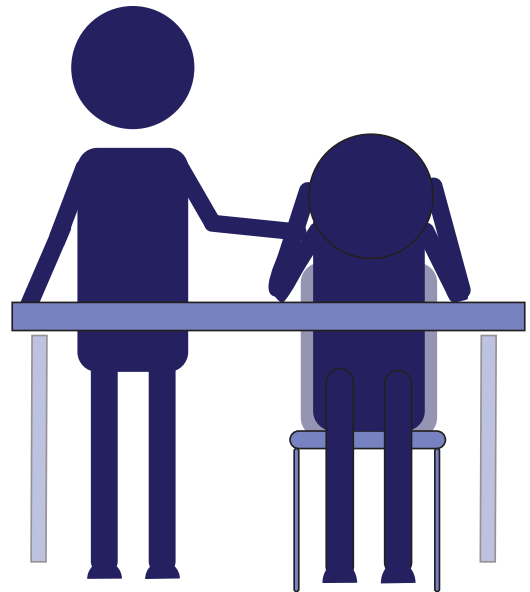
Understanding your mentee's personality and how they respond to feedback is crucial for a successful mentoring relationship as well. Take the time at the beginning of the year to talk about this issue with your mentee. Ask them how they work best and what kind of direction they need. When giving feedback, incorporate questions that allow your mentee to reflect on their instruction rather than simply telling them what to do. Lastly, make sure that when you give feedback it is specific and descriptive. Refrain from giving feedback that seems evaluative. You can also both take personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to gain further insight into how to form an effective relationship.

Mid-Year Hires

Next, a mid-year teacher hire presents a unique challenge. It is crucial for every campus to have a process in place to pair any late hires with a mentor teacher on their first day, because teachers who start mid-year are often beset with a critical set of needs that a mentor needs to be prepared to address. While the rest of the school may be weeks or months into the school year, a late hire is essentially starting back at the first day of school. The mentor of a late hire will need to dedicate significant time as soon as possible to “ramp up” their mentee teacher not only on all customary beginning-of-year processes and procedures and to provide context on their students’ progress up to the present and prepare an action plan. Often, a late teacher hire is picking up from a long-term substitute or other temporary assignment situation, so a reset of classroom culture may be required before any quality teaching and learning can happen. An ideal mentor of a late teacher hire will need to be able to quickly evaluate and prioritize the needs of their mentee and then provide the necessary time and supports with their mentee as the new hire gets “up to speed” with their classes.

Persistence

The last challenge we will talk about is persistence. Being a new teacher is incredibly stressful. There will be times when your mentee needs additional support and encouragement to continue the work. Think back to your first year and relate to the difficulties your mentee has. Offer guidance on how to navigate these difficult times and assure your mentee that these feelings are normal for new teachers. This will also help build a trusting relationship between you and your mentee. You should also be aware of the challenges that you will face as a mentor. The additional responsibility combined with the task of helping a new teacher can lead to feelings of frustration. In these moments, remember why you agreed to mentor new teachers. Realize that your experience and expertise are crucial to the development of new teachers, and ultimately the success of your students.



New Teacher Support Types:

It is natural for mentors to focus on instructional techniques when working with their mentee, but that alone is not enough. Research states that a productive new teacher program requires different types of support to ensure the new teacher can learn and grow. According to *Supporting Beginning Teachers* by Tina Boogren (2015), mentees require four types of support. They are:

- 1) Physical Support
- 2) Emotional Support
- 3) Instructional Support
- 4) Institutional Support

Physical Support: Teachers who need physical support require help with the logistics and practical aspects of the job. For example, they might need help with making copies, gathering classroom supplies, decorating their classroom, etc. Mentors can help support the new teacher by helping them set up their classroom or collaborating to gather supplies and resources for their classrooms.

Emotional Support: Teachers who need emotional support require help with feelings of inadequacy or frustration. Mentors play a huge role in supporting mentees who need emotional support and can help new teachers find answers to the many questions they may have. Even assistance with lesson planning or dealing with work/life balance benefit a new teacher dealing with these types of issues.

Instructional Support: Teachers who need instructional support require help with the techniques and application of sound teaching practices. New teachers often receive this type of support the most. Mentors can help mentees by arranging for observations or helping with lesson planning and classroom procedures. Mentors can also help new teachers find and join professional organizations that will help them in grow in the profession.

Institutional Support: Institutional support helps new teachers develop a growth mindset and commitment to becoming a lifelong learner. Mentors can help new teachers look beyond their first year, and lay the foundation to have a prosperous and effective career as an educator. Institutional support is often overlooked in most mentoring programs.

Type of Mentor Support	Response From the Mentee
Physical	The mentee asks questions or expresses concerns regarding supplies, materials, classroom setup or technology use.
Emotional	The mentee expresses difficulty coping, exhaustion, or loneliness or questions the decision to become a teacher.
Instructional	The mentee expresses concerns about interactions with parents or students, asks questions about content or instructional strategies, or has difficulties with pacing, student engagement, or classroom management.
Institutional	The mentee asks questions about how to get involved at the school, district, or community level; expresses interest in conference opportunities or professional organizations; or asks questions or offers suggestions regarding collaboration time.

The following chart has been adapted from Supporting Beginning Teachers (2015) by Tina Boogren

Giving Feedback: Paraphrasing

An important way to facilitate a productive feedback session is to make sure you spend time listening to and understanding the new teacher. A great technique to ensure you are conveying that message is to use paraphrasing. This means after your mentee speaks, summarize their main points. Not only will this practice help make sure you fully understand the mentee’s point, but it also lets them know that you hear and value what he or she has to say. A great way to do this is to use the stem, “What I hear you saying is...”

Ideas for When You Can’t Meet In-Person

Although meeting face-to-face with your mentee is preferred, there will obviously be times when that is not possible. However, that doesn’t mean that you won’t be able to continually assist your new teacher with questions they may have. In *Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships* (2003), they offer some ideas to maintain positive mentor and mentee relationships even when you can’t meet in person. Some of the tips they give are:

1) Double Entry Journals - Just like the classroom instructional use of this technique, maintaining a double entry journal with your mentee will help keep both of you connected. Share a notebook with your mentee and have them write any questions or concerns on one side, and you can respond on the other side. Set a time-frame for when you will respond and designate an area (desk, mailbox, etc.) where the journal will stay.

2) Questions of the Week - This is a variation of the double entry journal where on one side of a notebook are the days of the week, and on the other side is a place for the mentor to respond. At the end of each day (or however often you decide to complete this activity), the mentee will write a question and leave the notebook in a designated area. The mentor will then read the entry and continue with a brief response. This technique is helpful to set a schedule that promotes the reflection process of your mentee.

3) Mentor Memo - Creating a memo form that your mentee can use to alert you to the pressing nature of any issue can also be helpful. Mentees can complete the memo and then leave it on the desk of the mentor. This can indicate to the mentor the level of urgency needed for any issue. (See below for sample Mentor Memo)

Mentor Memo: To:	From:	Date:
Pressing Question:		
Questions/Concerns/Successes		
Priority:		
Immediate	When you Can	Whenever
Mentor's Comments:		

Appendix A

Communications Guidance for Mentees

Communicating with Parents

The best way to build a positive relationship with the parents of your students is to say something positive to the parent about their child in the first interaction. Developing a “parents as partners” approach is key for educators who need parental support and buy-in for what their children are learning and doing in the classroom. After an initial face-to-face or phone interaction, following up with an email accomplishes two things. First, it documents the interaction and secondly, it gives the parent a way to revisit the provided information as needed.

Example follow-up email to a parent:

“Hello, Mr. Fisher - thank you for speaking with me this afternoon about Missy’s missing homework. As we discussed, Missy works hard in (subject) class so her participation grade in my class is very good; however, her overall grade is affected by the missing assignments. I will be glad to accept any of the missing work until the end of this week for a maximum grade of __. Thanks again, and please contact me if you have any follow-up questions or concerns. Sincerely, Mr. Jones”

Communicating with Students

Because students spend so much time with their teachers, shared classroom language “shorthand” often develops. While this is normal and expected, the tone of a teacher’s communication with their students must be perceived by ALL students to be consistent, fair, and nurturing. A good rule of thumb is if you wouldn’t be comfortable saying something in front of a parent or principal, it should not be said to a student.



New or novice teachers also need assistance with addressing students in crisis. Mentor teachers can serve as a connector between teacher and appropriate supports. Schools also have dedicated staff resources for students dealing with homelessness, hunger, abuse, bullying, thoughts of suicide, and other issues. Reach out to the principal, counselor, or community liaison to help support students as they encounter hardships.

Communicating with Administrators

The best practice for communicating with your administrators is to be proactive. Novice teachers will tend to want to share everything with their principal or say almost nothing to their principal, so as the mentor, you should help your mentee determine what types of information are most helpful for your administrator to know (and when).

A good rule for teachers here is to give sufficient information to their principal, so they are not blindsided by an escalating issue or able to communicate something especially positive happening on their campus.

Examples of topics that require significant advanced notice to the principal:

- Ideas for field trips (work with field trip coordinator to ensure district deadlines are met)
- Grant proposals and other fundraisers
- Proposed change in practice or policy for participation in an extracurricular activity

Examples of times to communicate with your administrator as soon as possible:

- Giving your principal a “heads up” after a tense exchange with a parent
- The UIL team you coach won first place at a regional meet
- A struggling student has demonstrated a notable improvement or turnaround

Examples of times not to communicate with your administrator (and instead asking your mentor for advice on how to address the situation):

- Frustrations about another staff member (note: reporting a serious violation is a different matter)
- Asking to be excused from a scheduled staff meeting the day of the meeting

Document, Document, Document!

Documentation is a critical part of the job of a teacher. Work with your mentor to set good habits early.

Opportunities to document:

- Any/all parent phone calls or face-to-face interactions
- Outside-of-normal interaction with any student
- Witness to an altercation on or off campus
- Any suspicion of child endangerment

Public Records

Everything in district email is public record. And if your school uses Remind 101 or other texting services to contact parents and/or students via text messaging, those messages are also subject to public record.

Examples of times when email or text is appropriate:

- Reminder of deadline
- Sending a calendar invitation for a work meeting
- Short, clear communication that requires quick, wide distribution

Example of appropriate emails or texts:

- “Hello, 5th grade parents – reminder that permission slips for the March 7th field trip to the history museum are due tomorrow. Please sign and return the slip in your child’s homework folder. Please call or email your homeroom teacher if you have any questions – thank you!”
- “Are we still on to meet at 1pm in my classroom? Let me know, and thanks!”
- “Could we meet about a student we share? I’d like to discuss instructional strategy ideas with you. Let me know if you’re available after school for a quick 10-minute brainstorming session.”

Dallas ISD Board Policies DH(Local) and DH(REGULATION) provide specific guidance on communications with students <http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/361?filter=DH>.

Examples of times when email or text is inappropriate:

- Sharing sensitive or private information about a student
- Expressing an opinion about why a student acts a certain way

(A good rule of thumb is if your explanation is going to take longer than 3-5 sentences, pick up the phone or talk in person.)

Appendix B

Novice Teacher Mentoring Log



New Teacher Support: Novice Teacher Mentoring Log

(Intended to serve as a tool for mentors and mentees to record activities and reflections)

(Record in Google) Date: _____ Time Started: _____ Time Spent _____

Mentor Teacher: _____ New/Novice Teacher: _____

School: _____ Grade Level/Content Area: _____

Focus - Check all that apply:

- Analyzing Student Work
- Developing/Reviewing Professional Goals
- Problem Solving
- Planning Lesson
- Discussing Content Standards
- Pre-observation Conference
- Post-observation Conference
- Observing Instruction
- Modeling Lesson
- Observing Veteran Teacher
- Reflecting
- Communicating with Parents
- Using Technology
- Providing Resources
- Other/Notes _____

<p>What's working?</p>	<p>What are your concerns/challenges/focuses?</p>
<p>Mentee's Next Steps:</p>	<p>Mentor's Next Steps:</p>

Next Meeting Date: _____ Focus for Next Meeting: _____

Questions for Mentor:

- a. Are all students engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish?
- b. Are all students working with content aligned to the appropriated standards for their subject and grade?
- c. Are all students responsible for doing the thinking in this classroom?
- d. Do all students demonstrate that they are learning?

Suggested areas in which the mentee can observe the mentor teacher and/or request the mentor teacher focus their observation on:

- Classroom Arrangement
- Classroom Management
- Classroom Talk
- Teacher Talk
- Learner Talk
- Learner Engagement

Notes:

Appendix C

Debrief Conversation Template (adapted from The New Teacher Project)

Appendix C



Debrief Conversation Template (adapted from *The New Teacher Project*)

DEBRIEF ELEMENT	SAMPLE CONVERSATION
STAGE 1: PERSONAL MOMENT	<p>How is your day going? Did you enjoy that football game last night? How is your family?</p>
STAGE 2: ALIGN ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING	<p>Did your students demonstrate mastery on the DOL? Did students reach the goal for this lesson? What did you want to happen by the end of this lesson? What went really well during this lesson? Let's dig in to how we can get the kiddos to reach the goals that you set for them.</p>
STAGE 3: SELECT A FOCUS AREA	<p>When did you feel that students were the most engaged during the lesson? When did you feel yourself lose your students in the lesson? What did you want your student to do when they were in their groups? How did they know the expectations? Why do you think so few students did what you wanted them to do? What held your students back today?</p> <p><i>*Mentors may have to identify the focus area for the new teacher*</i> Example: Let's talk about how you can keep the students engaged. Example: Let's talk about how to ensure students follow your directions.</p>
STAGE 4: AGREE ON NEXT STEPS THAT CAN LEAD TO IMMEDIATE EXECUTION AND IMPROVEMENT	<p>How can you make sure that all students know exactly what they should do at every moment of the lesson? Which strategy could you use to engage students? What are the learning styles of your students? What steps could you take to ensure that students understand your directions? What checks for understanding will you use?</p> <p><i>*Mentors may have to identify and model the next step for the new teacher. The next step could be the strategy that is highlighted during the reciprocal observation*</i> Example: When I want my students to follow my directions, I tell them how they will move, at what volume, and what their participation should look like, such as, "Sitting silently at your desks, start working on the Do Now." Let's practice.</p>

Debrief Question Stems

Effective Probing Questions
When you _____, students _____, and this caused _____. How did that affect your ability to get through the lesson?
When _____, you _____. What do you think is going to happen if you continue to _____?
Students _____ when you _____. Why do you think they responded in this way?
To improve _____, we need to address _____. What could you do differently tomorrow in this area?
I am going to read back something that you said, and you tell me if you think students understood _____.
Add your own:
Add your own:

Appendix D

Resources

Books for Mentors

- Boogren, T. (2015). *Supporting beginning teachers*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research
- Boreen, J. (2000). *Mentoring beginning teachers: Guiding, reflecting, coaching*. York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Breaux, A. & Wong, H. (2003). *New teacher induction: How to train, support, and retain new teachers*. MountainView: Harry K. Wong Publications
- Hicks, C. D., Glasgow, N. A., & McNary, S. J. (2005). *What successful mentors do: 81 research-based strategies for new teacher induction, training, and support*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Lipton, L., Wellman, B., & Humbar, C., (2003). *Mentoring matters: a practical guide to learning- focused relationships*. Sherman, CT: Mira Via
- Piercy, T. D., & Curtis, S. (2006). *Compelling conversations: Connecting leadership to student achievement*. Englewood, CO: Advanced Learning Press.
- Porter, H. (2008). *Mentoring New Teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Rittiman, E. (2015, February 12). *Make Yourself Indispensable – 5 Workplace Communication Strategies*. Retrieved from <https://csuglobal.edu/blog/make-indispensable-5-workplace-communication-strategies>

Websites for Mentors

- Jung Typology Test™ (free) <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>
- Learning Forward (formerly the National Staff Development Council) <https://learningforward.org/>
- The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network <http://www.mentors.net/articles.php#practices>

Books for Novice Teachers

Mendler, A. N. (2001). *Connecting with students*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mendler, A. N. (1997). *Power struggles: Successful techniques for educators*. Rochester, NY: Discipline Associates.

Portner, H. (2002). *Being mentored: A guide for protégés*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Mitchell, Dennis. The Do's and Don'ts of Discipline. Publisher: Author. (www.IGNconsulting.com)

Thompson, J. G. (2012). *First Year Teacher's Survival Guide: Ready-To-Use Strategies, Tools & Activities for Meeting the Challenges of Each School Day*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Websites for Novice Teachers

Edutopia's Resource Toolkit for Rookie Teachers <https://www.edutopia.org/article/new-teacher-resources-toolkit>

New (Middle School) Teacher 911 From MiddleWeb <https://www.middleweb.com/1751/new-teacher-911/>

National Education Association's New Teacher Resources <http://www.nea.org/tools/for-new-teachers-articles.html>

New Teacher Resources From TeacherVision <https://www.teachervision.com/teaching-strategies/new-teacher-resources?s3=>

Scholastic's New Teacher Survival Guides <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/new-teacher-survival-guides/>

Teaching Channel's New Teacher Survival Guide <https://www.teachingchannel.org/blog/2015/07/15/new-teachers/>

The Best Advice for New Teachers From Larry Ferlazzo <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2012/04/23/the-best-advice-for-new-teachers/>