



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4

four

Key Resources

- Qualities of Effective Mentors (R1)
- Criteria for Selection of Mentor Teachers (R4)
- Sample Mentor Teacher Application and Assignment Forms (R6, R7)
- Sample Mentoring Partnership Agreement (R8)
- Sample Agenda: District Mentor Training (R12)
- Sample Collaborative Assessment Log (R13)
- Graphic of Collegial Coaching Cycle (R19)
- Sample Individual Growth Plan (R23, R24)
- Sample Interaction Contact Log (R27)

Qualities of an Effective Mentor

In designing a mentoring program, it will be important to assure the selection of effective mentors. Research conducted by Rowley (1999) lists the following qualities of an effective mentor:

- (1) Commitment to the role of mentoring
- (2) Acceptance of the novice teacher
- (3) Skill in providing instructional support
- (4) Effectiveness in different interpersonal contexts
- (5) Model of being a continuous learner
- (6) Ability to communicate hope and optimism

When designing a mentoring program, the following questions, based on the six qualities listed above, can serve as a guide for the application and selection process of qualified mentors. Using these criteria will ensure a rigorous mentoring experience for all novice teachers.

Commitment to the Role of Mentoring

*How can the mentoring program increase the fundamental **commitment** of mentors in delivering effective guidance and support to novice teachers?*

- Roles and responsibilities of the mentor need to be clearly defined and understood.
- Quality training programs need to be ongoing in order to engage mentors actively and consistently.
- Facilitation of mentor support groups is essential.
- Documentation of conferences and professional development activities involving the mentor and novice teacher need to be maintained through confidential logs or journals.
- Compensation needs to be provided for mentors in such forms as stipends, release time from extra duties or additional opportunities for professional growth.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4

four

Acceptance of the Novice Teacher

*How can the mentoring program encourage mentors to be more **accepting** of novice teachers?*

- Quality training programs need to raise the level of consciousness among mentors about the importance of being empathetic and nonjudgmental.
- Communication, guidance, and problem-solving methods must be a formal component in the training of mentors.
- Problems and concerns of novice teachers need to be understood and addressed.

Skill in Providing Instructional Support

*How can the mentoring program prepare mentors to **provide instructional support**?*

- Time and opportunities need to be provided for classroom observations between mentors and novice teachers, as well as in the classrooms of other teachers.
- Time and opportunities need to be created for mentors and novice teachers to have ongoing, collegial dialogue based on their shared experiences on such topics as co-planning, teaming, and observations.
- Quality training programs need to develop the knowledge and skills needed for coaching, using multiple methods for classroom observations, conferencing and providing feedback, and reflection.

Effective in Different Interpersonal Contexts

*How can the mentoring program help mentors gain insight concerning the effectiveness of their leadership styles and **interpersonal skills**?*

- Communication styles of mentors must be understood and adjusted to meet the needs of the novice teachers.
- Quality training programs need to engage mentors in completing and reflecting on self-inventories to gain insight into their interpersonal skills such as leadership, communication, and conflict management.

Model Being a Continuous Learner

*How can the mentoring program ensure mentors **continue their own professional growth**?*

- Opportunities need to be provided for mentors to lead and engage in ongoing professional learning activities.
- Professional incentives should be considered by districts and/or schools in order to support and encourage ongoing commitment and continuous professional learning.
- Criteria for mentor selection need to be clearly stated and must include commitment to ongoing mentor training.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4

four

Able to Communicate Hope and Optimism

*How can the mentoring program ensure that mentors are able to **communicate hope and optimism** to novice teachers?*

- Opportunities need to occur for mentors share how they have overcome their own struggles and frustrations in a caring way as a trusting relationship is built.
- Frequent time for face-to-face communication between mentor and novice teacher needs to occur to establish trust.

Resources to assist the LPDC in further understanding the qualities of effective mentors are included in the Appendix.

Criteria for Mentor Selection

According to state regulations, the minimum criteria for selection of mentors are the following:

- The district board of education may select a certified teacher with at least three years of experience who is actively teaching in the district or a retired teacher or administrator to serve as a mentor teacher. The district board of education shall provide training in current educational practices to the retired teachers or administrators;
- The teacher is committed to the goals of the local mentor plan;
- The teacher has agreed to maintain the confidential nature of the mentor teacher/novice teacher relationship;
- The teacher has demonstrated exemplary command of content area knowledge and of pedagogy;
- The teacher is experienced and certified in the subject area in which the novice teacher is teaching, where possible;
- The teacher is knowledgeable about the social and workplace norms of the district board of education and the community the district board of education serves;
- The teacher is knowledgeable about the resources and opportunities in the district and able to act as a referral source to the novice teacher;
- The teacher provides letters of recommendation as determined by the district mentoring plan from those who are familiar with the mentor teacher applicant's work; and
- The teacher agrees to complete a comprehensive mentor training program.

Other criteria to be considered in the selection of mentors include:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Credibility with peers and administrators
- Leadership capacity
- Demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to learn
- Respect for multiple perspectives



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

- Demonstrated commitment to improving the academic achievement of all students or work in diverse settings;
- Experience with coaching or other collaborative models
(New Teacher Center @ UCSC, 2004, p. 9)

Resources to assist the LPDC in the selection of qualified mentors are included in the Appendix.

Application and Selection of Mentors

Veteran teachers interested in becoming mentors should be invited to complete an application according to the requirements of the district mentoring plan. The application form could include information about areas of expertise, years of experience, answers to specific questions about the individual's desire to become a mentor, and letters of recommendation supporting the request.

Consider the following procedures to guide the selection process:

- Applicants must apply in writing for the position of mentor teacher;
- Applications will be submitted to the school and/or the LPDC in accordance with the district mentoring plan;
- Applicants will be screened by the school leader and/or the LPDC in accordance with the district mentoring plan; and
- Recommendations can be made to the building principal, who will make the final decision in selecting mentors and match them with the novice teachers.

Resources to assist the LPDC, the school leader, and the program coordinator in further understanding the application process are included in the Appendix.

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

All of the following roles and responsibilities are essential to ensure a successful experience for both the mentor and the novice teacher. The first five roles and responsibilities are required by the state regulations for mentoring.

State Regulations

A mentor must:

- Participate in sustained, ongoing mentor training;
- Make a commitment of time to the mentor-novice relationship over the required one-year mentoring period;
- Establish regular weekly conferencing times to discuss novice teacher needs, provide ongoing support, and plan and reflect on classroom practices aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards;



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

- Maintain confidentiality for all mentor-novice activities; and
- Contribute to ongoing program evaluation.

Additional Recommendations for Mentoring for Quality Induction

A mentor should:

- Assist the novice teacher in adjusting to, and becoming familiar with, the school culture, policy, procedures, resources, and personnel;
- Document mentoring activities and time;
- Provide opportunities for the novice teacher to observe the mentor and other content experts;
- Observe the novice teacher during the school year to provide feedback, teaching tips, guidance on curricular issues, and suggestions for classroom management;
- Be a model of professionalism;
- Encourage the novice teacher to participate in collaborative professional learning activities, such as action research, team meetings, and reflective practice; and
- Assist the novice teacher in understanding the importance of and receiving the benefits of the district's observation/evaluation procedures.

Matching Mentors with Novice Teachers

Successful matching of the mentor and the novice teacher is essential to creating a positive mentor-novice teacher relationship. Suggested matching criteria include, but are not limited to, the following: similar grade level or content area; common planning periods; close proximity of mentor and novice teacher classrooms; and compatibility of the mentor and novice teacher (Breux & Wong, 2003; Jonson, 2002). Personalities, communication styles, and gender might also be taken into consideration for matching purposes. Convenience and availability should not be the sole criteria.

Some districts might have a shortage of qualified mentors that limits the choices in the selection process. Mentors might need to be selected from among teachers outside the novice teacher's content area/grade level, within the school/district or from among retired educators. Mentoring might have to occur as a group of teachers working together rather than in a one-on-one arrangement.

Mentor Training Components

A key element in designing and implementing a successful mentoring program is provision for ongoing training and follow-up support for mentors. There are many published resources that provide information and tools to support the design of mentor training. It is not the purpose of this toolkit to promote any specific training program. Training should be designed based on the needs of the mentors within the district and aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. Mentor training may be provided by district personnel, national experts, colleges or other mentor training providers on one or all of the training components in accordance with the district mentoring plan.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

The Department of Education recommends the following mentor training components, recognizing that it will not be possible to offer all of these training components in a one-year period of time. The list identifies possible mentor training components and their alignment to the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors and Novice Teachers and Their Transitions

As a novice teacher is inducted into the teaching profession, the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and novice teacher may vary according to the phases of teacher development. The roles and responsibilities are influenced by the knowledge, dispositions, and performances, that are identified in the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.

Research indicates there are different models that clarify predictable phases in the mentor-novice teacher that can evolve over time. Three of those models (Jonson, 2002) follow:

Cohen's Model

Cohen (1995) identified these four phases:

- Early phase: mentor and novice teacher work together to build trust and a comfort level;
- Middle phase: mentor gains knowledge about the goals and concerns of the novice teacher and begins to exchange information;
- Later phase: mentor explores interests and beliefs of the novice teacher to gain better insight into reasons for his/her decisions; and
- Last phase: mentor encourages novice teacher to become a reflective practitioner.

Movement through these four phases depends on the readiness of the novice teacher and the skills of the mentor. Both impact the progression of the mentoring relationship.

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development's Model

ASCD (1999) offered these four phases:

- In the beginning, the mentor takes the leadership role. The mentor provides information as needed and then helps to set priorities and becomes a model for the novice teacher. At this time the novice teacher moves quickly from anticipation about the new job to a period of stress and survival;
- As a partnership is built, the mentor offers assistance and seeks suggestions from the novice teacher to allow him/her to take some responsibility for the relationship. At this time the novice teacher might become disillusioned about his/her job and question the way things are;
- As the relationship becomes stronger, the two teachers work more collaboratively, sharing ideas, analyzing, and making decisions. At this time the novice teacher is becoming rejuvenated; and
- The mentor begins to withdraw from the relationship by encouraging the novice teacher to become more independent. The mentor uses questioning techniques to guide the novice teacher in becoming a reflective practitioner. At this time the novice teacher is back to a period of anticipation and is ready for self-growth.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

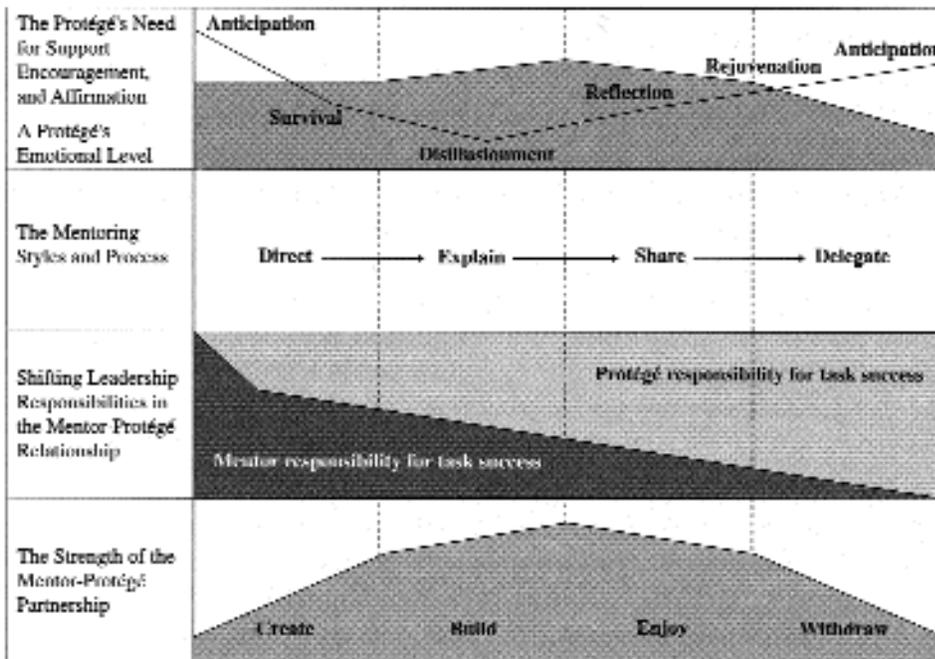
Joyce and Showers' Model

Joyce and Showers (1982, 1983) and Showers (1985) described the following roles to support transitions in the mentor-novice teacher relationship:

- Providing companionship: mentor and novice teacher mutually reflect and share frustrations and successes;
- Giving technical feedback: mentor provides feedback after visiting the novice teacher in his/her classroom. This is not evaluation but rather technical feedback which is specific, accurate, and nonjudgmental;
- Analyzing application and extending executive control: novice teacher begins to learn when a strategy is appropriate and what the outcome will be by doing so;
- Adapting to the students: novice teacher begins to examine how to apply teaching strategies that best meet the needs of the students; and
- Facilitating: successful implementation of new teaching methods requires practice, so the mentor needs to encourage the novice teacher to gain confidence during this trial time.

Figure 1 depicts another view of the changing roles of the mentor and novice teacher during the phases of teacher development.

Figure 1. Phases of Novice Teacher (Protégé) Development



Source: Jonson, K.J. *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed*, p. 106, copyright 2002 by Corwin Press, Inc. Reprinted by Permission of Corwin Press, Inc.

This training component focused on Standard 8 (Communication) and Standard 10 (Professional Development) of the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4

four

Communication and Building Trust

Standard 8 (Communication) and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

A positive mentor-novice teacher relationship involves building and maintaining respect, trust, and effective communication. Trust is built over time by doing the following:

- Listen in ways that show you respect your novice teacher and that you value his/her ideas;
- Practice openness when sharing information;
- Speak authentically about your feelings;
- Explain what you understand and admit when you do not understand something;
- Explain why you shift the level of your support according to the situation;
- Follow through. Do what you say you will do;
- Continuously work at safeguarding confidentiality;
- Be open to feedback;
- Be truthful;
- Be consistent; and
- Be supportive publicly and privately (Zachary, 2000, pp. 123-124).

Self-inventories can be completed to identify the communication styles of both mentors and novice teachers. These self-inventories can assist the mentor in becoming a better communicator with the purpose of building a trusting relationship with the novice teacher. The results can determine strengths as well as areas for improvement with communication skills that include the ability to articulate effective instructional strategies, listen actively, ask reflective questions, offer positive feedback, and use electronic communication effectively.

The Challenges of Mentoring

Jonson (2002) has identified four categories that challenge a mentor:

- Overextending him/herself;
- Interacting with the novice teacher without clearly defined roles and responsibilities, training or support from the school leader;
- Assuming too much responsibility for the novice teacher; and
- Under-utilizing the professional growth opportunities available through working with a novice teacher.

The novice teacher and mentor need to work together to establish parameters for their roles and responsibilities and their expectations of each other so the mentor doesn't overextend him/herself. Often, release-time and other resources are not available to the mentor for use in supporting the novice teacher. The mentor needs ongoing support and communication with the school leader to enhance the mentoring relationship.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4 four

As part of his/her professional growth, the mentor must incorporate some of the following skills: working with adult learners; observing and collecting data; problem-solving; demonstrating empathy; and providing constructive feedback. Challenges to the mentoring process might include:

- Inability to find time to meet on a regular basis;
- Inappropriate faculty room discussions of novice teacher's abilities;
- Personality conflicts;
- Novice teacher who resists mentoring assistance; and
- School leader requesting evaluative information from the mentor.

The Adult Learner

Mentors need to know the characteristics of adult learners, learning styles, and phases of teacher development to facilitate working with novice teachers and other colleagues.

Barbknecht and Kieffer (2001) identified these four adult learning principles:

- Adult learners are socially interactive;
- Adult learners bring rich experiences to learning;
- Adult learners learn by doing, often in problem-based situations; and
- Adult learners benefit from the process of feedback and reflection.

It is important that adult learners have professional learning opportunities that provide a deep understanding of a topic (*e.g.*, knowledge) and time to practice new skills with feedback until it changes practice (*e.g.*, performance). Active learning processes for adults include reflection such as “discussion and dialogue, writing, demonstrations, practice with feedback, and group problem-solving” (NSDC, 2001, p. 24).

Adult learners have different learning styles and strengths. It is important for them to see, hear, and be actively involved in a variety of professional learning activities. Adult learners appreciate choice in the selection of their learning opportunities and the learning environment, which might be alone or with others.

Questioning Techniques

Standard 4 (Instructional Planning and Strategies) and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

In purposeful mentoring relationships, the mentor skillfully employs questioning techniques that challenge and stretch both the mentor and novice teacher to reflect on their classroom practices which enhance student learning. A mentor should employ many of the following questioning techniques:

- Questions should be open-ended;
- Questions should focus on the event or behavior and not the person;
- Questions should be probing; and
- Questions should be non-judgmental.



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

A mentor might want to consider using reflective questions to help the novice teacher hypothesize what might happen in a lesson, analyze what worked or didn't work in a lesson, imagine possibilities for future lessons, and compare/contrast what was planned and what really happened in the lesson.

Reflective question stems could include:

- What's another way you might...?
- What would it look like if...?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- What do you think...?

(New Teacher Center @UCSC, 2004, p. 4)

Use of Standards-Based Formative Assessments

Standard 1 (Subject Content Knowledge), Standard 4 (Instructional Planning and Strategies), Standard 5 (Assessment), and Standard 6 (Learning Environment)

The use of standards-based formative assessments provides a confidential structure for interaction between a mentor and a novice teacher to allow for reflection on strengths and areas for growth based on the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. The purpose is to allow the mentor to guide and support the novice teacher in identifying professional learning activities that are most appropriate to improve classroom teaching. The mentor can help the novice teacher identify and make progress toward his/her identified professional goals. Together the mentor and novice teacher determine the next steps by focusing on what to observe during classroom visitations, by collaboratively planning lessons, by making suggestions for improvement or adjustment, and by modeling lessons.

The characteristics of formative assessment used in the mentoring relationship include:

- An ongoing measurement of growth over time;
- Evidence of student learning and teacher practice to help identify areas of strength and for growth;
- Objective and data-based;
- Responsive to the teacher's developmental needs;
- Interactive and collaborative; and
- Assessment tools that support inquiry and reflection (ETS, 2001, p. 28).

Collaborative assessment logs can be used as the basis for accountability and interaction between the mentor and novice teacher. Collaborative assessment logs may include the following criteria:

- A clearly articulated goal related to a professional teaching standard;
- A developmental guide and support system based on continuous discussion and ongoing assessment;
- Frequent use of self-assessment and reflection; and
- A shared accountability and responsibility for contribution to the mentor-novice teacher relationship (Moir, July 2003).



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

Classroom Visitations

Standard 1 (Subject Content Knowledge), Standard 3 (Diverse Learners), Standard 4 (Instructional Planning and Strategies), Standard 5 (Assessment), Standard 6 (Learning Environment), Standard 7 (Special Needs), Standard 8 (Communication), and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

When a mentor visits the classroom of a novice teacher, he/she has an opportunity to observe what is happening in the classroom. By using reflective questioning techniques to engage the novice teacher in reflection after the classroom visitation, the novice and mentor can begin to set goals. The information gathered from the classroom visitation can then be used with the collaborative assessment log to support the novice teacher’s reflection in planning for his/her continuous professional growth.

Figure 2 shows a format to guide the mentor and novice teacher in collaborating in a planning conference, making a classroom visitation, and engaging in a reflective conference.

Figure 2. Format for Preparing and Reflecting on a Classroom Visitation

<p>Planning Conference (5-10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a specific date and time for a classroom visitation and follow-up conference • Agree upon what is to be observed • Determine where the mentor is to sit in the classroom • Discuss the lesson plan and what is to be learned • Specify any observation tools to be used
<p>Classroom Visitation (20-50 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe one or two teaching behaviors or strategies • Use any observation tools agreed upon prior to classroom visitation
<p>Reflective Conference (10-30 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a trusting environment • Share any specific data collected • Engage in reflection of lesson • Discuss areas of focus for demonstration lessons or professional learning activities

Source: Jonson, K.J. *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed*, p. 89, copyright 2002 by Corwin Press, Inc. Reprinted by Permission of Corwin Press, Inc.

The purpose of using various observation tools is to record objective, usable data that focus on verbal and nonverbal behaviors of both students and novice teacher. Observation tools that the mentor can use during a classroom visitation to collect data include: seating charts; student/teacher question patterns; on-task behavior; reinforcement and feedback; classroom movement patterns; cause-and-effect records; verbatim transcripts; and video-tapes (Jonson, 2002).



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4

four

Collegial Coaching

Standard 1 (Subject Content Knowledge), Standard 3 (Diverse Learners), Standard 4 (Instructional Planning and Strategies), Standard 5 (Assessment), Standard 6 (Learning Environment), Standard 7 (Special Needs), and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

There are four phases in the collegial coaching cycle: planning; observation of the teaching performance; reflection time; and debriefing. During the planning phase, the mentor and novice teacher determine what specifically will be observed during the classroom delivery of the lesson and how data will be collected so that decisions can be made as to the effectiveness of the lesson. The mentor observes and collects data on the instructional or learning behaviors determined during the planning phase. The observation notes are meant to be a mirror so that the teacher can see what was taking place during the lesson. Following observation, the mentor and novice teacher meet to reflect on instructional actions and the relationship between teaching behaviors and student learning. Debriefing includes problem-solving to effect changes in instructional practices (Dantonio, 1995).

Resources to assist the LPDC and mentor training providers to further understand and implement collegial coaching opportunities are included in the Appendix.

Designing Professional Growth Activities

Standard 8 (Communication) and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

Rigorous mentoring ensures movement of the novice teacher from dependence to self-direction through ongoing support and guidance from the mentor. The use of collaborative assessment logs, the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, classroom visitations, and/or collegial coaching can provide the mentor with tools to assist the novice teacher in planning for ongoing professional learning opportunities. Examples of research-based professional learning activities include:

- Sharing views concerning possible career paths and goals;
- Providing direct assistance: answering questions, suggesting strategies, supplying resources;
- Creating opportunities for the novice teacher to become involved in professional activities – such as faculty activities, professional association, special projects – and to “prove” him/herself as a professional;
- Providing information on the mentor’s own professional development plan as a model;
- Assisting the novice teacher in setting short- and long-term professional goals;
- Acting as a resource to help the novice teacher obtain information about certification and continuing education requirements; and
- Suggesting or providing books, articles, professional videos, and so on (Jonson, 2002, pp. 96-97).



District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training

4 four

Professional growth activities that meet the different needs or learning styles of the novice teacher and mentor include:

- The novice teacher engaging in a specific professional learning strategy, such as lesson study, followed by an interactive session with his/her mentor; and
- The mentor engaging in a specific professional learning strategy, such as action research, to further his/her learning about how application of the teaching standards is impacting his/her students.

The novice teacher and mentor can individually or collaboratively engage in a variety of professional learning opportunities. These may include action research, case discussions, curriculum development, data analysis of student work, journaling, lesson study, portfolios, or study groups (Easton, 2004).

Ongoing Networking Opportunities

Standard 8 (Communication) and Standard 10 (Professional Development)

Mentors need frequent opportunities to meet with other mentors to share successes, to problem-solve, and to share effective instructional strategies. Networking and/or focus groups provide opportunities for mentors to model and be engaged in continuous professional learning. These professional learning activities benefit both veteran and novice teachers and impact student learning in their respective classrooms.

Interactions between Mentor and Novice Teacher

Dialogue and discussion are key communication activities that facilitate ongoing professional growth for both mentor and novice teacher. Different types of contact provide numerous ways for mentor and novice teacher to have ongoing interactions. Types of contact include one-on-one interaction, grade level/discipline team meetings, interactive journal, phone calls, e-mails, conferences, drop-in visit, *etc.* See Appendix for sample interaction contact logs that might be used by a mentor-novice teacher pair.

E-Mentoring

The mentor and novice teacher might engage in frequent electronic communication as one way to discuss classroom experiences, ask questions, share resources or reflect without having to schedule a face-to-face meeting.

Online mentoring is a professional learning opportunity that allows both mentors and novice teachers to engage in online discussions with other veteran and novice teachers within and outside the district. Online discussions allow ongoing networking opportunities for veteran and novice teachers that allow them to share or request ideas or resources related to teaching practices such as classroom management techniques, developing of formal and informal assessments, curriculum development or implementing instructional strategies.