

BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bedford, Massachusetts

**Mentor Teacher
Handbook**

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**MISSION STATEMENT
BEDFORD MENTORING PROGRAM**

Bedford Public Schools

Mission Statement: Mentoring Program

The mission of the Comprehensive Induction Program of the Bedford Public Schools is to promote student learning by supporting the professional as well as the emotional growth and development of beginning/new teachers.

Goals of the new teacher program:

- To enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.
- To create a collaborative culture which supports a comfortable partnership between novices and experienced teachers.
- To develop a repertoire of instructional practices that meets the needs of a diverse community of learners.
- To ensure the retention of quality teachers.

Goals of the mentor program:

- To support and meet the personal and professional needs of teachers new to the Bedford Public Schools by providing a professional, non-supervisory and non-evaluative learning experience.
- Assist new teachers to reflect on their teaching practices
- To introduce new teachers to the culture of our school system.
- Reduce teacher isolation by strengthening collegiality relationships, which will support new teacher professional development.
- Enhance student learning and achievement by improving the effectiveness of new teachers.
- To satisfy the requirements of licensure.

Importance of Mentoring

IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Why Is A Mentoring Program Important?

The 1993 Education Reform Act (Chapter 71, Section 38G) and the Massachusetts Regulation for Educator Licensure (603 CMR 7.00) require districts to provide a system of support for beginning educators in the form of an induction program. Numerous studies and surveys indicate that new teachers who are provided with support are more likely to involve students in more complex learning experiences, make better decisions about curriculum, manage classroom discipline more effectively, and willingly engage in reflective practice about their teaching.

Veteran teachers and new teachers find that their mentoring partnership is a mutually beneficial relationship.

Roles and Responsibilities

**ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE
MENTOR TEACHER**

Characteristics of a Mentor Teacher

- Is an excellent teacher and role model.
- Must agree to attend all mentor meetings and complete mandatory criteria.
- Professionally and emotionally committed to their mentee.
- Willing to commit to weekly meetings with their mentee.
- Is capable of maintaining a confidential relationship with their mentee and colleagues.
- Must be enthusiastic, nurturing, caring and diplomatic as an active listener and communicator.
- Display a leadership role concerning curriculum and instruction.
- Is skilled in planning, organizing and managing extended teaching responsibilities.
- Analytical and reflective about their own teaching and that of their mentee.
- Possess the knowledge of conferencing and observational skills.
- Is astute in communication with their mentee concerning their teaching style and practices.
- Knowledgeable of resources and resource personnel to assist their mentee with technology and curriculum design.

Responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher

- Participate fully in the Mentor Program.
- Complete all supporting documents of the mentor program evaluation.
- Model for your mentee what it is to be a “teaching professional”.
- Demonstrate to your mentee that the role of a “teaching professional” is not limited to teaching and dealing with parents, or participating in faculty meetings, curriculum development and decision making, but includes a commitment to reflect on one’s teaching practices, to set goals for improvement, and to grow professionally. Because of the time-consuming nature of this relationship, it is considered a major part of professional growth for both the mentor and mentee.
- Provide a confidential and supportive environment to your mentee.
- Support your mentee emotionally. Helping to keep your mentee’s perspective about his/her own expectations, which may be unrealistic at times, can provide emotional support. Teaching your mentee to prioritize an overwhelming number of tasks is necessary for his/her survival.
- Make sure that your mentee is provided with the teacher and student handbooks. Include discipline policies and procedures in your discussions.
- Introduce your mentee to the scope and sequence and goals of the school curriculum as well as the curriculum guides and the curriculum frameworks of the content areas.
- Explain the daily procedures of the school year to your mentee and provide guidance throughout this process. Mentees should have a complete tour of the building that they work in. An explanation of all administrative duties (i.e. technology, attendance/homeroom, lunch count, fire drills and crisis procedures) should be part of the introduction.
- Meet formally and informally with your mentee throughout the school year. Weekly meetings are expected at the beginning of the school year; by January the frequency of meetings should decrease.
- Convey information about who and what to know, written and unwritten policies and social norms. It is important that you help integrate your mentee into the social life of the school community. Introduce your new teacher to helpful support personnel who can help support curriculum and instruction. Explain how and when to access SPED services.

- Facilitate opportunities for your mentee to observe and access a broad variety of professional experiences with other faculty members. These observations may be of short duration, but ideally would occur with some frequency.
- Observe the new/beginning teacher at least two times with pre and post conferences framing the observation. The mentor should take notes during the observation to discuss the area of concern the teacher has requested that you concentrate on. The post conference that follows will cover the observations of the mentor. Mentors do not supervise. You serve as a peer and colleague to your mentee.
- Help your mentee understand the learning needs of all students.
- Assist your mentee in improving classroom teaching by offering assistance with classroom management and discipline strategies.
- Advise your mentee about his/her responsibility to communicate with parents as well as the parameters of his/her obligations to parents. Provide guidance to your mentee in grading and the scheduling and conferencing with parents. Help your mentee learn how to respond to emails, phone calls and drop-in visits from parents.
- Emphasize that your mentor relationship provides a confidential and supportive environment.

A Mentor's Expectations for the Mentoring Relationship

These are my expectations for our mentoring relationship. As your mentor:

I will be available to you.

I will help, support, and encourage you in managing and mastering the following areas of school work:

- Quality and quantity of work
- Work habits and procedures
- Business and housekeeping routines
- Interpersonal behavior

We will work together to solve problems regarding issues that are important to you and issues that are important to me for the development of your career in teaching.

We will treat each other with collegial respect, keeping our commitments to each other, for example, appointments, assignments, and agreed-upon expectations.

I will be open to observing your teaching and provide you with objective data that will help inform your teaching practice. I will also be willing to have you observe me and I will facilitate opportunities for you to observe the teaching of other faculty.

We will practice reflective teaching and interview each other.

Although I do not have all “the answers”, I will help you frame the questions that will lead you to your own answers and questions.

I will share with you and demonstrate what I have learned about teaching.

I will treat everything that transpires in our mentoring relationship with confidentiality, within the reasonable bounds upon which we have agreed.

We will learn from and with each other.

Source: Adapted with permission of Research for Better Teaching from the *Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills* by Jon Saphier and Robert Gower. © 1987.

The Benefits of the Mentoring Experience for Mentors

There is much literature on how mentoring benefits the mentee. Research has shown that there are beneficial outcomes for mentoring teachers as well. Benefits for mentors include...

- An opportunity to share information about teaching practice
- Reflection on personal education practice
- Expands the mentor's way of thinking
- Self awareness and professional growth
- Collaboration and learning new strategies
- Satisfaction and pride in observing their mentees professional growth
- Recognition of personal professional skills and strategies

A Dozen Guidelines for Effective Mentors	Beginning Teacher Concerns
<p>Establish rapport.</p> <p>Be friendly and positive.</p> <p>Acknowledge the beginning teacher's skills.</p> <p>Emphasize the importance of the teacher.</p> <p>Be tactfully honest.</p> <p>Be empathetic.</p> <p>Provide articles, pamphlets, or techniques in order to demonstrate helpfulness.</p> <p>Be a good listener.</p> <p>Ask objective rather than personal questions.</p> <p>Set realistic mentor-role expectations.</p> <p>Demonstrate the benefits of experience and change by sharing your own knowledge.</p> <p>Share ideas and solutions.</p>	<p>Classroom management</p> <p>Motivating students</p> <p>Individual differences</p> <p>Assessing student work</p> <p>Relations with parents</p> <p>Organization of the classroom</p> <p>Lack of familiarity with existing resources— people and materials</p> <p>Problems of individual students</p> <p>District/school procedures and policies</p> <p>Terminology</p> <p>Professional Growth</p>

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Mesa, AZ Unified School District

**GUIDELINES
FOR
CONFIDENTIALITY**

GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY FOR THE MENTOR PROGRAM

Discussions with Principals/Chairs/Coordinators

1. All comments about the mentee should be non-evaluative since the mentor is not an evaluator or supervisor.
2. Comments should be general and neutral-neither positive nor negative.
3. Clarify the reasons for the inquiry-understand the question.
4. Redirect all comments about the mentee to the mentee.
5. Mentors, with the mentee's knowledge, may discuss the mentee's teaching performance with appropriate administrator if, in the mentor's professional judgment, the academic growth and development, social well being or safety of the student is at risk.

Discussions with Other Teachers, Staff Members, Parents

1. All comments should be non-evaluative.
2. Be more careful in casual conversations.
3. Redirect all comments to the mentee.
4. Mentors, with the mentee's knowledge and permission, may discuss the mentee's teaching performance with resource professionals whose job it is to help teachers. If the mentee needs help in designing hands on lessons the subject specific coordinator may be consulted for assistance and advice.
5. The mentor plays no role in supervision or evaluation.

Confidentiality in the Mentor Group Discussions

Mentor teachers will be able to discuss, in confidence, general aspects of the mentee's teaching performance with other members of the mentoring team.

If There Are Problems With the Mentoring Relationship

In the event that the mentor or mentee feels that the mentoring relationship is unproductive or uncomfortable, either member may confidentially seek assistance from the Office of the Superintendent.

LEGALITIES OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Loose Lips Sink Ships Things That Can Get Educators in Legal Hot Water!

By: Susan Fitzell

Remember those World War II posters that warned, “Loose Lips Sink Ships?” Well, that dire wisdom is just as urgent today. It is possible that a comment ingenuously made in the faculty room, in an email, during an IEP meeting or a phone call can cause a teacher embarrassment, at best, or a district to become embroiled in a lawsuit, at worst. Caution to be professional at all times as well as ever mindful of confidentiality laws has always been a top priority of school districts. However, in our digital age, this issue has taken on a new meaning and has escalated caution to another level.

In order to ferret out the most critical concerns facing schools today and some tips for how to deal with these concerns, I spoke with four lawyers who work with schools on a regular basis. Following are some insights gleaned from those conversations.

What is considered written documentation?

Anything and everything written about a student on school grounds can be subpoenaed for use in court. Attorney Dianna Halpenny of Sacramento, CA, reinforces that anything in writing with a student's name in it is part of the official student record. It is not necessarily true that if teachers keep it at home that it is not a student record.

Email Communication

When faced with the challenge of keeping email private on school servers, teachers used to be advised to use web mail versus a downloadable email client such as Microsoft Outlook, Eudora, or Thunderbird. The belief was that web mail such as Yahoo mail; Hotmail, Mail2Web, etc. were safe. Attorney Pamela Parker of Austin, Texas, reveals another, less known, fact: even web-based email is forensically accessible. Web-based email history may still be on the school server. Parker acknowledges that schools are not necessarily monitoring emails; however, a forensic computer specialist can recreate the emails if necessary. The reality of today's world is that everything that is digital lives forever. Parker employs a sound analogy, “Having a conversation by email or text message is not different than having a private conversation on stage at Carnegie Hall in front of a full house. Most people won't pay attention, but some will.”

Teachers may send an email to a parent, colleague, supervisor, etc. believing that the email will remain confidential between them. However, there is no guarantee that the recipient of an email will respect that confidentiality or realize the importance of keeping the interaction private. Sometimes, despite all good intentions, emails are forwarded accidentally. This easily happens when the writer uses “reply all” or continues to respond to an email that has the entire thread attached. I've been amazed at what I've had included in a message to me when I have been added as a recipient midstream in an email conversation. When I scroll down, I might read conversation to which I should not have been privy. Here's a tip: Look at what's attached to the bottom of your email before you hit “send!”

Phone Messages

Another consideration is phone messages. Not only can they be overheard, they can be forwarded. Parker contends that even teacher's children might see and pass on text messages or phone emails. Parker advises educators to have critical conversations in person. Attorney Brad King of Richmond, Virginia, goes on to explain that even messages on personal phones, especially those regarding relationships with students, can become public domain. He explains that teachers' phone records can be involved in litigation. Again, the digital age brings a new level of accountability to the issue. Digital phone messages, as well as text messages, are easily forwarded and potentially retrieved.

Text Messages

Have you ever gotten a text or sent a text that was meant for someone else? Are you sure that deleted texts are not potentially accessible if a related case was brought to court? How much text messaging is available is dependent on your telecommunication carrier. There may be information out there that you do not know is there.

What is the Law?

Add to this reality the latest federal rules of discovery. Mark J. Goldstein, an attorney based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin educates his clients to understand that these rules incorporate all kinds of regulations to get electronic information. Consequently, the reality is that the 'rules of discovery' mean that any information regarding students and/or teachers that one might presume to be private is subject to discovery in litigation. Goldstein emphasizes that the courts have held consistently that emails and text messages are not private, such that they may be subject to discovery in litigation (balanced, of course, against student privacy rights). Halpenny affirms that the legal ramifications are very clear: A teacher's right to free speech is limited in the employment context, as it relates to their personal grievances. The courts have consistently held that a teacher does not have a free speech right and it is not constitutionally protected if they are expressing a personal wrong. If teachers protest publicly at a board meeting or speak derogatorily about an administrator, the courts say they do not have the rights to free speech. Comments are only held up by the courts if it's a matter of public concern. Otherwise, the courts say teachers do not have the right to free speech (in the employment context). A public concern is a grievance that affects the public: the teacher's students, the school community, the public. Personal grievances that only affect the teacher are not protected under free speech. Basically, the courts do not typically side with the teacher.

Pay Attention to Professional Standards of Communication

Therefore, what might be stated in conversation, or written in an email, can cause havoc if care or inattention to professional standards is not employed.

What About Verbal Conversation?

In School

King stresses that teachers might vent in the faculty room, hall, or office believing that they are in safe territory and in trustworthy company. They might comment while scheduling an IEP meeting, "Oh, this is that "high maintenance parent." If that comment is overheard and related back to that parent through the grapevine, it might cause the parent to be inflamed, at the least.

At Home

Educators frequently talk about personal information when venting and it can, and often does, come back to haunt them. If teachers need to vent, vent at home without mentioning specifics about, or identifying, the student with whom they are having issues.

In the Community

Halpenny adds that it's important to be aware of surroundings outside of school too. For example, a teacher's conversation with a friend in the grocery store may easily be overheard.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

BUILDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Successful mentoring comes from the mentor and protégé working as a team. This relationship develops as a result of the efforts by both. The mentor plays a vital and unique role by bringing classroom experience and expertise to the relationship. The needs of the protégé will be the focus for the mentoring year. The team seeks to establish a relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and collegiality (Jonson, 2002).

Recent statistical reports indicate that more than 50% of today's new teachers entering classrooms will leave the profession before they have five years of experience. Beginning teachers can become discouraged because they are expected to perform with the same skill and confidence as colleagues with many years of teaching experience. Mentors can help protégés develop confidence in making informed decisions that enrich professional knowledge and sharpen their teaching abilities.

There are two important factors in effective mentoring programs: building the relationship and two-way communication. Both are critical, and each relationship is as unique as the individuals involved.

The responsibility of the relationship rests with both the mentor and the protégé. The protégé is an active partner in this relationship. As you go through this information, please keep in mind this is a collaborative, collegial relationship that grows. In a collaborative relationship, both parties are actively building the relationship. You may want to share some of this information with your protégé.

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP: Many things contribute to a successful relationship. Below are a few pointers to keep in mind when preparing to start the mentoring year. Both mentors and protégés should have a:

- Willingness to invest time and energy.
- Strong conviction that teachers have a positive effect on the quality of a school.
- Sense of confidence in their own abilities.
- Belief that mentoring is a mutually enhancing professional development opportunity in which both partners will achieve satisfaction from the relationship.

Mentors have the responsibility to carry out many roles throughout the relationship. At times, the mentor will advise when the protégé is seeking information, counsel to provide emotional support, and at all times role model to ensure open continual communication. The protégé can expect the mentor to be **ADVISOR, COUNSELOR, TRAINER, SPONSOR, ROLE MODEL, ADVOCATE, OPENER OF DOORS** and, of course, **FRIEND**. (Daresh, 2003).

DEVELOPING THE RELATIONSHIP:

- Establish a warm, genuine, and open relationship that encourages learning.
- Keep in frequent contact with each other. Do not always wait for the other person to call or make the contact.
- Establish realistic expectations for the relationship.
- Use the Decision Points Checklist to determine the best time and method to reach each other in addition to finding out other information.
- Be a good listener. Show a genuine interest in what is being said.
- Encourage the asking of questions.
- As a mentor, do not be afraid to admit you do not know everything about teaching.
- Share your own experiences and insights as a teacher -- good and bad.
- Build trust with respect, open communication, and support. Attempt to offer as much of these as possible.
- Make regular phone calls and/or send regular e-mails. Share unit plans and resources.
- Create an environment to be open and honest with your needs and those needs of your protégé. Neither you nor your protégé should fear judgment. The mentoring relationship is not a performance review.
- Have informal visits and conversations. Be available in a timely manner.
- Try to be nonjudgmental and open.
- As a mentor, validate the challenges of teaching. Take your partner's ideas and feelings seriously.
- Discuss problems realistically and know that sometimes you have the same problems.
- Offer support. Be positive. Ask what is needed.
- Be accessible. Be willing to help in areas that feel more pressing.
- Your mentoring partner is your peer.
- Talk about areas other than teaching. Do not be afraid to share some of your personal interests.
- Be available, open, and honest. Be reliable, and follow through with activities.
- Both can benefit from the experience; the protégé from the knowledge and experience of the mentor, and the mentor from the enthusiasm of the protégé.
- Maintain a sense of humor!

Taking the Pulse on Your Mentoring Relationship: A Checklist for Mentors

- ___ I accept the teacher as a unique individual.
- ___ I help the teacher feel he or she belongs in the school and in the profession.
- ___ I show confidence in the teacher.
- ___ I let the teacher know I care about him or her.
- ___ I make the teacher feel he or she had something to contribute.
- ___ I sense that the teacher is comfortable bringing problems to me.
- ___ I let the teacher express his or her feelings and ideas.
- ___ I live up to the agreements we have made.
- ___ I hold inviolate confidential information about the new teacher.
- ___ I provide him or her with resources for developing constructive ideas.
- ___ I offer constructive feedback based on observational data.
- ___ I respectfully and actively listen to and consider his or her point of view.
- ___ I continually seek to improve my ability to assess others in a just and impartial way.
- ___ I refrain from negative comments and making misinformed judgments about others.
- ___ I treat the new teacher without prejudice.
- ___ I continually seek to improve my professional and interpersonal skills.
- ___ I model self-reflection.
- ___ I nurture the teacher's self-reflection.
- ___ I volunteer my special skills.
- ___ I evaluate the attitudes and activities of the new teacher with an open mind.
- ___ I encourage personal and professional growth of this teacher.
- ___ I am kind and tolerant.

Source (adapted from): Mentoring: A Resource and Training Guide for Educators

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

(Much of this information is adapted from content
provided by Jane Wolff, FACS Content Expert)

What if you and your protégé have difficulty in your relationship?

Conflict is generally related to misunderstood communication. In dealing with conflict, think about how you are communicating with your protégé and how your protégé is communicating with you.

Conflict Resolution involves: anger management, active listening, empathy, self-discipline, an understanding of the consequences, non-violent expression of your feelings, non-violent behavior, problem solving, and an appreciation of other's beliefs.

Roadblocks to Communication involve the following types of communication:

- Directing, commanding
- Warning, threatening, persuading with guilt
- Moralizing, preaching, proselytizing
- Advising, providing answers or solutions
- Ridiculing, disapproving, name-calling
- Judging, criticizing, disagreeing
- Diagnosing, psychoanalyzing, reading "meaning" into a situation/words
- Cross-examining, prying, interrogating

Seven guides for better listening are:

1. Spend more time listening (close your mouth)
2. Find interest in the other person
3. Stay out of the way
4. Listen to what people say "between the lines"
5. Make notes
6. Assume a listening body posture
7. Be aware of personal "filters" or biases (i.e. going easier on the cheerleader or football player) In order to more actively listen and thus avoid conflict, try the following:
 - Think carefully about your initial response
 - Listen for sense data--the underlying feeling your protégé is expressing
 - Recognize and accept feelings
 - Feed the feelings back--interpret what was heard
 - Trust--express trust that the other person can do something about the situation

Assertive communication will help you focus on the problem and not on the personality:

1. Constructive Assertiveness

- Communicate concerns clearly
- Insist behavior be corrected
- Resist being manipulated

2. Empathetic Responding

- Listen for protégé's perspective
- React in ways that encourage further discussion

3. Problem Solving

- Identify the problem
- Identify and select solution
- Obtain commitment

Once you have obtained a commitment, hold each other to that commitment. Most likely you will see the conflict begin to disappear and the relationship to grow. If this is not the case, please contact your Content Expert for assistance. It is his/her role to mediate the relationship and if necessary sever the pairing.

HANDLING CONCERNS BEYOND THE CONTENT AREA: Some issues may surface for the protégés that stem from their school or district. The protégés may be unsure how to handle feelings of being overwhelmed from a lack of assistance, isolation from adults, and exhaustion on a regular basis. They also may be dealing with vague expectations from an administrator, policy questions, lack of useful feedback at their building, and in-service that does not appear to meet their needs. Such issues are more related to the home district. The mentors can show support by encouraging the protégés to seek out someone in the building or district to help with local questions and issues.

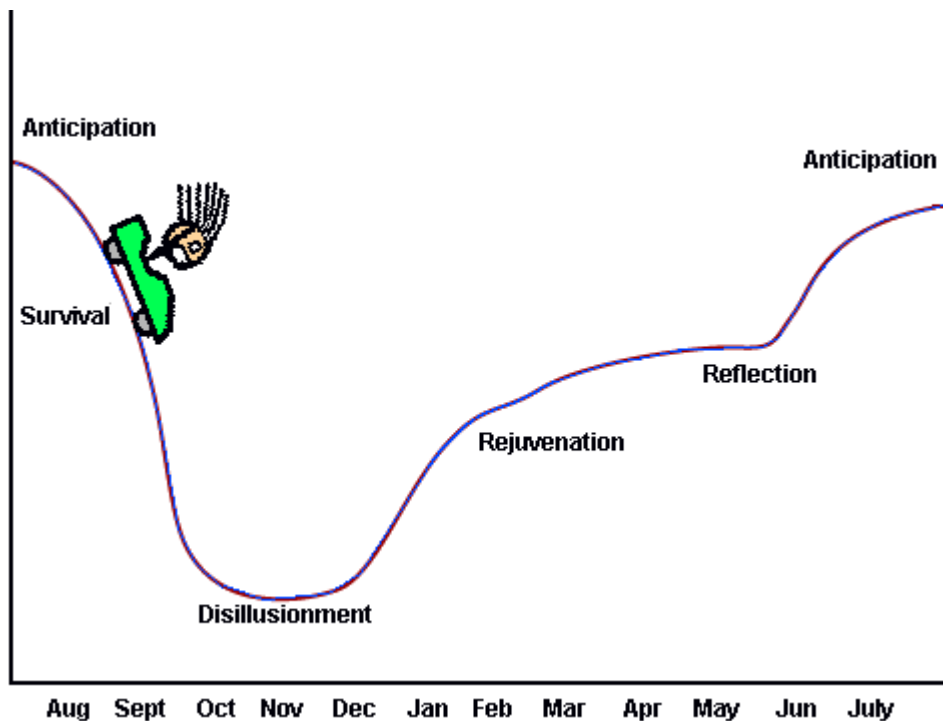
Protégés may have a mosaic of mentors for support in different venues. The role of the content mentor is to support the work and encourage professional growth in the content area. There will be local needs that a local mentor may better address.

**Phase of First Year
Teaching**

PHASES OF FIRST YEAR TEACHING

PHASES OF FIRST YEAR TEACHING

The school year has ups and downs! In looking at the Phases of First Year Teaching, you can better understand what may be happening at various times throughout the school year. It may offer some insight as to why new teachers may be feeling the way they are. The following chart shows the phases as they occur during the year followed by a description of each phase. It is interesting to talk about these phases and how they change for a more experienced teacher. (Lipton & Wellman, 2003)



Anticipation: New teacher begins to anticipate the happenings of the first year of work. When entering the classroom, the teacher holds a commitment to make a difference. This is a very large goal, and teachers often are vague and rather idealistic about how they will accomplish this goal.

Survival: Around the middle of September and October, realities are setting in. New teachers are faced with many different problems for the first time and have no past experience to help solve them. Most teachers feel they are running to stay up with things and don't have time to reflect on their work and continue to prepare.

Disillusionment: This happens around the middle of October and runs into January. This is the "hit-the-wall" time after working nonstop since the beginning of school. This stage will vary in intensity and length. Novice teachers begin to second-guess their abilities, commitment and worth in the teaching field. Teachers may get sick during this time because of fatigue. Many events are occurring during this time such as back-to-school night, their evaluation with their administrator, and meeting parents through conferences, etc. This phase is usually the toughest challenge to overcome.

The mentor can share materials and offer tips for managing this phase. Support the protégé in examining what has been accomplished and what can be given up as unnecessary or ineffective routines. Acknowledge the protégé's feelings of inadequacy and do not diminish them by suggesting that these feelings will just go away.

Rejuvenation: A winter break will mark a transition in the pace of the school year. Being with family and friends over the break helps the teacher become grounded again. Many times, there will be a clearer understanding of the realities of the classroom and new teachers will begin to sense their accomplishments thus far. This phase will last into spring. There will be a sense of urgency as the year is coming to the end, that things must be accomplished.

Reflection: The last weeks of the first year are good for reflecting and taking stock in their work. Mentors are essential in helping new teachers remember how far they have come and what they have learned, what they would modify and what would be set aside.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: Establishing reflective practice is important to all teachers because teaching is conducted in the isolation of the classroom. Taking 15-20 minutes per week to write your thoughts about teaching can bring teaching practice into focus. Reflective dialogue with a partner is one way of looking at the practice of teaching. Another way is through journal writing of happenings along with your reaction to what happened. Notes about your teaching experiences do not have to be formal writings.

One reflective process is P+M-I* developed by Edward DeBono to provide a simple framework for reflection and self-assessment. It is as simple as having three columns to record your thoughts in: P+ would be the positives, M- would be the negatives and I* are the interesting or intriguing ideas that are neither plus nor minus. This process can be utilized by both the mentor and the protégé to reflect on something related to mentoring, teaching practice or even parent conferences (Lipton & Wellman, 2003).

As the mentoring team discusses reflection notes, you will begin to see recurring practices and thoughts about teaching. These writings can provide a better understanding of your teaching practices (Udelhofen & Larson, 2003)

Evolution of a Teacher Chart: Suggested Responses

Anticipation (August-September)

- What will the first day really be like?
- Have I thoroughly reviewed the first day checklist?
- Are my lesson plans organized and effectively planned?
- Will my mentor and I have a good working relationship?
- Will my students and staff respect me?
- Will my classroom management and strategies be effective?
- How will class size affect my teaching ability?

Survival (September-October)

- I am finding the first month overwhelming.
- There is little time to stop and reflect on my experiences.
- I can't seem to get everything done.
- There are mounds of paperwork.
- I need help with ASPEN and other systems new to me.
- I want to succeed.
- I need to keep my energy level and commitment up to effective standards.

Disillusionment (November-December)

- The realization that things are not going as well as I want.
- What is wrong with my classroom management?
- There is so little time to get everything done.
- I feel like all I am always at school or working on school plans.
- I need to take time to relax and reflect on what I am doing.

Rejuvenation (January-March)

- Having winter vacation makes a tremendous difference for teachers.

- The uncertainties found in the disillusionment phase are subsiding.
- You are feeling more comfortable and confident.
- You have a broader perspective.
- The vacation gives an opportunity to organize and plan curriculum.
- It is a time to sort through materials, organize them and prepare new ones.
- Look over standards and check off those that have been covered.
- Evaluate the next steps.

Reflection (April-May)

- Look back to look ahead.
- Highlight those events that were successful and those that were not.
- Consider changes and begin to plan for next year.
- Reflect on your management, curriculum and teacher strategies.
- Envision your second year. This will bring a new phase of anticipation.

Anticipation (June)

- Use what you learned this year to ease into your second year.
- Start organizing procedures that you will find effective. Some possible ones are:
- When you need help/conferencing
- Keeping a notebook
- Listening to/responding to questions
- Participating in class discussions
- Returning to task after an interruption.

Source :Adapted from : WCSD Mentor Teacher Program
[www.washoe.k12.nv.us/mentor teach/](http://www.washoe.k12.nv.us/mentor_teach/)

MENTORING GUIDELINES

- **How Do I Get Started**
- **Checklists**
- **Helpful Information for New Teachers**

Mentoring: How Do I Get Started?

Initial Meetings:

- Meet and welcome your mentee
- Determine when to meet and set weekly meetings
- Discuss confidentiality (Tab. 4)
- Review Bedford Public Schools calendars (Tab. 7)
- Refer to Year-at-a-Glance Checklist (Tab.7)
- Get started with the Mentor/Mentee Information Checklist (Tab.7)
- Refer your mentee to the First Day Checklist (Tab. 7)
- Refer your mentee to articles in Tab. 7 : Notes for New Teachers, Suggestions for New Teachers, and Classroom Management which can be referred to throughout the school year by your mentee
- Refer your mentee to New Teacher Needs Assessment for personal reflection (Tab. 7)

Weekly Meetings:

- **Record all meetings in the Mentor Meeting Log** from September through May (Tab. 10)
- Review Tab. 5: Suggestions for Creating a Mentoring Relationship
- Continue to refer to Year-At-A-Glance Checklist to assist you in constructing meetings
- Refer your mentee to the Who's Who in Your Building to assist your mentee in communication with resource staff and colleagues (Tab.11)
- Make sure you have discussed where your mentee can get assistance with instructional resources (Tab. 11)
- Review: Reflective Dialog article in Reflecting Conference section (Tab.8)
- Review: Taking a Pulse on Your Mentoring Relationship: A Checklist for Mentors (Tab.5)

Peer Observations

- Set a conferencing date for the first peer observation.
Confirm the time and date of the reflecting conference. It should be the next day if possible.
- Review with your mentee Tab. 4: Confidentiality
- Refer to Scenario (Tab. 8) Use with your mentee to analyze what can happen in a lesson when clear objectives and procedures are not properly set forth prior to teaching a lesson. Discuss the scenario prior to the first peer observation.
- Refer to Tab. 8: Peer Observation Guidelines (Tab.8)
- Read: Conferencing Skills (Tab.8)

- Read: Guidelines for Observations (Tab. 8)
- Read: Reflecting Conference (Tab. 8)
- Review: Peer Observation Logs (Tab. 8)

Two peer observations are required criteria for compensation for mentoring.
(Tab. 10)

**FIRST DAY CHECKLIST
& Year-At-A-Glance Checklist**

First Day Checklist

Included in this checklist are many things to consider. You may want to peruse this and sort out what is important for you.

Efficiency in the classroom is the hallmark of an effective learning environment. Established procedures, consistently applied and taught to your students at the onset of the school year, will significantly improve your classroom management time.

Directions:

- Check (✓) each item for which you already have a prepared process
- Place an (X) by any item for which you do not have a policy but believe you need one.
- Highlight those items which you will teach the student the first day of school.

I. Beginning Class

- ☐ A. Roll call, Absent, Tardy
- ☐ B. Academic Warm-Ups
- ☐ C. Distributing Material
- ☐ D. Class Opening

II. Room/School Areas

- ☐ A. Shared materials
- ☐ B. Teacher's Desk
- ☐ C. Drinks, Bathroom, Pencil Sharpener
- ☐ D. Student Storage/Lockers
- ☐ E. Student Desks
- ☐ F. Learning Centers, Stations
- ☐ G. Playground, Schoolgrounds
- ☐ H. Lunchroom
- ☐ I. Halls

III. Setting Up Independent Work

- ☐ A. Defining "Working Alone"
- ☐ B. Identifying Problems
- ☐ C. Identifying Resources
- ☐ D. Identifying Solutions
- ☐ E. Scheduling
- ☐ F. Interim Checkpoints

IV. Instructional Activities

- ☐ A. Teacher, Student Contacts
- ☐ B. Student Movement Contacts
- ☐ C. Signals for Students' Attention
- ☐ D. Signals for Teacher's Attention
- ☐ E. Student Talk During Seatwork
- ☐ F. Activities To Do When Work is Done
- ☐ G. Student Participation
- ☐ H. Laboratory Procedures

I. Movement in and out of Small Groups

- ☐ J. Bringing Materials to School
- ☐ K. Expected Behavior in Group
- ☐ L. Behavior of Students not in Groups

V. Ending Class

- ☐ A. Putting Away Supplies, Equipment
- ☐ B. Cleaning Up
- ☐ C. Organizing Class Materials
- ☐ D. Dismissing Class

VI. Interruptions

- ☐ A. Rules
- ☐ B. Talk Among Students
- ☐ C. Conduct
- ☐ D. Passing Out Books, Supplies
- ☐ E. Turning in Work
- ☐ F. Handing Back Assignments
- ☐ G. Getting Back Assignments
- ☐ H. Out-of-Seat Policies
- ☐ I. Consequences for Misbehavior

VII. Other Procedures

- ☐ A. Fire Drills
- ☐ B. Lunch Procedures
- ☐ C. Student Helpers
- ☐ D. Safety Procedures

VIII. Work Requirements

- ☐ A. Heading Papers
- ☐ B. Use of Pen or Pencil
- ☐ C. Writing on Back of Paper
- ☐ D. Neatness, Legibility
- ☐ E. Incomplete Work
- ☐ F. Late Work

- ☐ G. Missed Work
- ☐ H. Due Dates
- ☐ I. Make-up Work
- ☐ J. Supplies
- ☐ K. Coloring or Drawing on Paper
- ☐ L. Use of Manuscript or Cursive (Elementary)

IX. Communicating Assignments

- ☐ A. Posting Assignments
- ☐ B. Orally Given Assignments
- ☐ C. Provision for Absentees
- ☐ D. Long-term Assignments
- ☐ E. Term Schedule
- ☐ F. Homework Assignments

X. Student Work

- ☐ A. In-class Participation
- ☐ B. In-class Assignments
- ☐ C. Homework
- ☐ D. Stages of Long-term Assignments

XI. Checking Assignments in Class

- ☐ A. Students Exchanging Papers
- ☐ B. Marking and Grading Assignments
- ☐ C. Turning in Assignments
- ☐ D. Students Correcting Errors

XII. Grading Procedures

- ☐ A. Determining Grades
- ☐ B. Recording Grades
- ☐ C. Grading Long Assignments
- ☐ D. Extra Credit Work
- ☐ E. Keeping Papers, Grades, Assignments
- ☐ F. Grading Criteria
- ☐ G. Contracting for Grades

XIII. Academic Feedback

- ☐ A. Rewards and Incentives
- ☐ B. Posting Student Work
- ☐ C. Communicating with Parents
- ☐ D. Students' Record of Grades
- ☐ E. Written Comments on Assignments

Source:

Mentor Teacher Handbook, Evergreen Collegial Teacher Training Consortium, Evergreen School District of Vancouver, Washington. 1987

Year-At-A-Glance Checklist

August

- ___ Meet, welcome your mentee
 - ___ Advise mentee about classroom set up and record keeping
-

September

- ___ Introduce mentee to faculty, staff
 - ___ Plan for Back-to-School Nights with mentee
 - ___ Mentor/Mentee weekly conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Review evaluation procedures/Criteria for Effective Teaching with mentee
 - ___ Review Staff Development Booklet with mentee
 - ___ Review student files for special health and education needs with mentee
 - ___ Back-To-School Nights (Elementary, MS, HS)
 - ___ Explain Crisis Procedures
-

October

- ___ Review goal setting with mentee
 - ___ Mentor/Mentee weekly conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Back-To-School Night (MS)
 - ___ Review Procedures for Standardized Achievement Tests with mentee
 - ___ Interim Reports (MS)
 - ___ Meeting with Mentor Facilitator
-

November

- ___ Mentor/Mentee weekly conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Parent Conferences (DS, LS, MS)
-

December

- ___ Mentor/Mentee weekly conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Report Cards (MS)
 - ___ Parent Conferences (LS, MS, HS)
-

January

- ___ Mentor/Mentee weekly conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Interim Reports (MS)
 - ___ HS Planning (MS)
 - ___ HS Placement Recommendations (MS)
 - ___ Mid-Year Exams (HS)
-

February

- ___ Mentor/Mentee conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ MS Placement Recommendations (Elem)
-

March

- ___ Mentor/Mentee conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Report Cards (MS & HS)
-

April

- ___ Mentor/Mentee conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Interim Reports (MS)
 - ___ MCAS administration
 - ___ Parent Conferences (DS)
-

May

- ___ Mentor/Mentee conferences
 - ___ Observation and feedback
 - ___ Begin writing level-to-level reports (Elem)
 - ___ Interim Reports (MS)
 - ___ Mentors submit prog. eval./reflection paper
 - ___ MCAS administration
 - ___ Criteria for Compensation Completed
-

June

- ___ Report Cards (MS, HS)
 - ___ Class Assignment Cards (Elementary)
 - ___ Completion of Student Files (Elementary)
 - ___ Close down classroom and store materials
-

NOTE: By January/February frequency of mentor/mentee meetings should decrease

Mentor/Mentee Information Checklist

- ☐ Meet and welcome your mentee
- ☐ Create Mentor/Mentee conference schedule
- ☐ Confidentiality
- ☐ Tour of the building
- ☐ Introduction to staff
- ☐ School Calendar
- ☐ Telephone Directory
- ☐ Phones/Email/Mail/Interoffice Mail
- ☐ Forms (Professional Days, Attendance, Personal Days, Field Trips)
- ☐ Substitute Information
- ☐ ASPEN
- ☐ Parking

Professional Handbooks/Portfolios

- ☐ Teacher Handbook/Student Handbook
- ☐ Teacher Contract
- ☐ Professional Development Portfolio (IPDP)
- ☐ Professional Days

Classroom Management

- ☐ Keys
- ☐ Updated Class Lists
- ☐ Schedule
- ☐ Staff Meetings/Grade Level Team Meetings/Common Planning Time
- ☐ Duty Assignments
- ☐ Lesson Planning
- ☐ Classroom Time Management
- ☐ School Discipline Code/Behavior Rubric/Procedures
- ☐ Supplies/Purchase Order Procedures
- ☐ Copy Machines
- ☐ Massachusetts State Frameworks
- ☐ District Curriculum
- ☐ Learning Strategies
- ☐ Cultural Diversity

- ___ Technology Integration
- ___ Classroom Newsletters
- ___ Open House/Curriculum Night/Celebrations of Learning
- ___ Field Trips
- ___ Interim Reports/Progress Reports
- ___ Preparing for Parent Conferences
- ___ Parent Communication

Student Assessment

- ___ Student cumulative folders
- ___ Accountability/Data Collection
- ___ Exams
- ___ Student Assessment Record and calendar
- ___ Saving Student Work

Procedures

- ___ Fire drill procedures
- ___ Crisis/Lock Down procedures/Emergency Codes
- ___ Early Dismissal/School Cancellation Procedures
- ___ Computer Lab Procedures/Technology
- ___ Retention Issues and Procedures
- ___ Observation of Neglect/Abuse & Filing Procedures

Student Services

- ___ Special Education
- ___ District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
- ___ Response to Intervention Process (RtI)
- ___ Accommodations and Modifications for Students on IEPs/504s
- ___ Counseling and Guidance Services

Teacher Evaluation Process

- ___ Mentor Conferences
- ___ Mentor Observations
- ___ Professional Growth Procedures/Forms
- ___ Administration Formal Observations

New Teacher Needs Assessment

Getting to Know and Working With Students:

- How to identify and address the diverse needs of my students
- Motivating students
- Assisting students with special needs
- Establishing rules and procedures for classroom management
- Effective classroom management strategies
- Setting up and organizing my classroom, lab and/or shop area

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:

- Finding state and district learning standards and how to align curriculum with the standards
- How to write a syllabus and lesson plan
- Building a repertoire of instructional strategies
- What is differentiation of instruction and how do I use it
- How to use varied assessments and strategies (formative & summative)
- Using student data to drive instruction, planning and assessment
- Using rubrics in grading
- Administration of technical skills assessments or end of course assessments

Program and Personal Development:

- Finding appropriate professional learning opportunities
- Joining and participating in appropriate professional organizations
- Locating and using effective instructional resources and materials
- Using technology in the classroom
- Reporting program quality
- Promoting program and career opportunities

Time Management:

- Organizing my time and work
- Organizing and managing the classroom
- Balancing my personal and professional responsibilities

Relationships with Stakeholders:

- How to work with families of my students
- How to prepare for and what to expect at parent conferences/Back to School Night
- Grading and reporting student learning
- Understanding my legal rights and responsibilities as a teacher
- How to work with my mentor(s) and how to ask for help when needed
- Establishing professional relationships with administration and other staff
- Observation of colleagues and how to discuss teaching and learning
- Developing collaborative skills
- CTSO's – starting a chapter and advising of members

Suggestions for New Teachers

Since the beginning of Bedford's in-house mentor training program, mentors have collaborated during the August training to brainstorm the following list of issues to discuss with new teachers. These were items that came to mind for past mentor classes and most do not specifically appear in the mentor handbook. You may find some of these suggestions helpful advice to give to the teacher for which you are mentoring.

Middle School/ High School

Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Pay attention to the time
- If the time goes over 10 minutes, set up a special conference at another time.
- Keep a clipboard handy to jot down notes or questions that need to be answered.
- Arrange chairs and handouts outside of the classroom for parents who are waiting.
- Try to think of an anecdote about the child to share with the parent.
- Ask that parent what s/he wants to know.
- Show a portfolio or student samples, if appropriate.
- Find out about home (friends, feelings about school, study strategies).
- Be careful when setting up communication with parent (avoid being unrealistic about how often you can call or write home).
- Email with parents is a personal choice, stress the lag time. If you choose not to use email, be prepared to tactfully explain why.
- Tell parents to use Guidance counselors as resources and liaison.
- Consider using a timer.
- Don't make promises that you can't keep.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Also, tell the new teacher that:

- A conference may not have any impact on child's performance or behavior.
- Is s/he doesn't know the answer, to say so and get back to the parents later.
- The parents they really need to see may not show and that they may need to call home to request a conference.
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- _____
- _____

Communication with Parents

- Be sure to return calls and answer notes, failure to do so = bad reputation!
- Consider calling parents of students with behavior problems when they exhibit good behavior.
- Document all correspondence with parents, for own records.
- Before you return a phone call, collect as much data as possible about the child's performance. Consult other teachers if appropriate.
- Put as much responsibility on the student and on the parents to ask and report information.
- It is your choice as to when you return phone calls. It is on your time, so be assertive about how long or short the conversation should be. Remember that many families have caller ID, you may want to block your number from being seen (*67 to block?).
- When a parent contacts you, find out what they want to know and validate their concerns where appropriate.
- Is a student is having problems, try to offer concrete suggestions about how the parents can help their child.
- Exude confidence. You are the professional. Don't be arrogant or use a lot of "teacher talk".
- Don't skip eating lunch!
- It's okay to say you don't know but will find out.
- If you anticipate a difficult call, have someone sit with you.
- Have documents and grade books at the ready.

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IEPs and 504s

- Document and keep copies of all correspondence.
- Read documents carefully and promptly.
- Communicate regularly with the SPED liaison.
- Knowing the specifics of the IEPs is the teacher's responsibility (a big one).
- Response to Intervention (RtI) Process.
- Consider coding your rank book to help remember liaisons and accommodations.
- Send copies of interim reports to SPED teachers.
- Before a SPED meeting, communicate with other teachers to present a united front.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Back to School Night

- Have a lesson plan- don't try to "wing it".
- Tell parents what students will learn and how they will be graded.
- Don't be negative—no venting. Say something positive about the class and the children.
- Have a syllabus to hand out.
- Have an "attendance" sheet so you know who is there.
- Emphasize that this is not a conference night.
- Consider having the parents do a sample activity.
- Be nice! The parents want to know that you are a kind person.
- Rehearse.
- OK to give some personal information to parents.

- Tell parents what they can do to help their children (specifics such as binders or books online or a web assignment).

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- _____
- _____

Miscellaneous

- Know where to send repair forms.
- Collegiality—seeking social activities and (limited) committee work to become part of the school culture.
- Discipline—consistent reinforcement and enforcement.
- Chain of command (whom to speak with first about problems and concerns).
- Calling parents and councilors about problems with students.
- Getting materials and making copies.
- Crossing the line with students—maintaining role as teacher and not as a friend.
- Keeping doors open with conferencing with a student. Enlist the support of your supervisor.
- If you expect a parent will call your supervisor, give the supervisor a “heads up” so that s/he can be prepared for the call.

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- _____
- _____

Elementary School

Back to School Night Ideas

- Always do something to lighten the mood, share your biography (hometown, where you went to school) or tell a funny anecdote at the beginning of the evening. The questions that the parents are often looking to answer at back to school night is simply, “Is the teacher nice?”
- Explain business items first, as this is the information that parents generally want to know right away (homework policies, birthday policies, lunch times, specialists, standardized test information, timing of report cards, etc.)

- Type out the kid's schedules to give to the parents.
- Prepare a "philosophy/curriculum packet" to distribute: be general not specific, as the needs and dynamics of your class will dictate the specifics as the year goes on.
- Think about how you would like to use parent volunteers. When will you use them? How will you use them do you want them to sign up tonight?
- Put out sheets for conference times (not dates, just times).
- Introduce room parents if you know who they are.

Fun Stuff

- Have the kids write a note to their parents asking them to take a look at some aspect of their classroom.
- Have the parents write a note back to the child and leave it for them to find the next morning. If a child's parent is absent ask another parent to "adopt" that child for the night and write a note to that child so that EVERY child has a note.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Setting Limits

- Realize that it is okay and necessary to set limits with parents. It's okay to say that you don't know the answer to a particular question at that time and that you will get back to them. It's okay to say that the focus of the evening is for general information that will benefit all parents of all children in the classroom and that you will be happy to set up a time to address specific issues /concerns is someone repeatedly asks for specific information about their child.
- You are not obligated to give out your home phone number, and should realize that if you do parents WILL call you at home all of the time.
- You are not obligated to give out your school email. If parents ask you can tell them that you spend your days "with the children and not at the computer" and that you are available by phone during certain hours and always by written note.
- After the speaking portions of the evening it is often beneficial to step out into the hall to avoid being "cornered" by parents who want to talk about their specific child. The goal of the evening is to relay information about the school year to come.

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- _____
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Thoughts about Parent Conferences

- Be sure to leave time to simply talk. Parents want to hear what you have to say. Don't feel that you have to go overboard on documentation. You don't need 10 work samples to prove a point.
- It is often beneficial to have notes about each child before you go into a conference. A note card or graphic organizer listing students' strengths and "goals" can be helpful esp. if you are a bit nervous.
- Be prepared to answer the question, "What can we do to help our child at home?"
- Some teachers like to have the children do a self-evaluation of their progress and to share this with the parents at conference time.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Scheduling Tips

- Take a look at someone else's scheduling forms. There are many to choose from.
- Have your room parents schedule your conferences for you.
- Send home three possible times and dates and have parents rank their choices.
- Leave 5 minutes b/w each conference to "catch your breath" or take a small break.
- Post schedule outside of the conference room.
- Post a sign asking parents to knock at their assigned time.
- Set a timer explaining that you are doing this to keep on schedule as it is so each to talk about children and forget that there are others waiting their turn.
- If you know a parent will not want to stop the conference at a set time, arrange to have someone call into the room or stop by to tell you that you have a phone call or are needed in another part of the building.

- You DON'T have to offer tailored times for specific parents. If you are conferencing between 8 and 3, you don't have to have a special conference at 4:30. You are a professional. Remember that doctors don't offer special hours. Parents leave work for appointments and their children's conference is important enough to merit the same attention.
- In the event that you have a "SCARY" parent conference, you can arrange to have someone sit in with you, opt to have the child present at the conference and/or leave the door open.
- If it is at all possible try to have specialists who work directly with specific children present at the conference.
- Send home a reminder the night before your conference with the time and the location of the conference.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Ideas for Report Cards

- Find out when they come out. Look at a blank one prior to report card season so you know what kind of information for which to be looking.
- Make sure that parents know of problems BEFORE they see them in print on the report card (previous notes home, progress reports, phone calls, Friday folders).
- Look at samples of other teacher's report cards to get a feel for the language and depth of teacher's comments.
- Realize that you are responsible for placing specialist grades (art, music, etc.) on the report card.
- Find out what things are important to grade and what things need not be graded.
- Ask to see someone else's grade book (intermediate) and ask how to average grades. Ask how they interpret grades.
- Be prepared to justify how you arrived at any particular grade should someone ask you.
- Give your report cards to your administrator to edit or ask them if they would be willing to do so.
- When writing a narrative decide who your audience will be: the parents or the child.
- _____

- _____
- _____

Be sure to reassure and remind your mentee that...

- These “things” do happen; they happened to you. Be willing to share past experiences.
- We sometimes need to simply “let it go”.
- It’s easy to focus on the one negative comment and ignore 20 positive ones. However, try to focus on the positive ones.
- Everyone has one “yucky” parent every year... it’s not just them. 😊
- _____
- _____
- _____

Notes for New Teachers

Being Certain In Uncertain Times

So, you just started teaching and now you may be unsure whether or not you will have a position somewhere next year. The budget crisis has many people wondering that same thing. Feeling out of control of a situation can certainly increase your stress level. What can I do about it? Take a look at what you have control over. How you react is really all you can control. You have a job right now. You are making a difference right now. Someone is noticing what a great job you are doing right now. Take this opportunity to do your best work and something will come of it. Be certain that no matter what, you have begun a wonderful career in teaching. Let that guide your next steps.

Ten Simple Ways Everyone Can Reduce Stress

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier so mornings are less hectic.
2. Avoid over-scheduling yourself so you have a realistic, calm day instead of a frantic day with an impossible schedule.
3. Learn to say “No” to projects, committees and social activities you don’t have time, energy or interest in doing.
4. Do a project you are dreading first thing in the morning. Get it behind you so you can enjoy the day!
5. Learn to delegate responsibilities to others.
6. Surround yourself with positive, upbeat friends and colleagues. People who constantly worry and complain manipulate others into negativity.
7. Make sure to get a good night’s sleep!
8. Relax and enjoy a change of pace on weekends. Do some things you truly enjoy. Make time for some fun, family and friend.
9. Forget about multi—tasking and focus on one thing at a time. Complete one task before moving on to the next one.
10. Focus on today instead of worrying about tomorrow.

WCSD Mentor Teacher Program

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By Barbara Gruber, M.A. & Sue Gruber, M.A. <http://teachers.net/gazette/NOV02/gruber.html>

Edited by Terra Graves

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Although you are most likely an excellent classroom manager or you would not be a mentor, it is often difficult to translate what you do into practical suggestions for the new teacher. Over and over we see this is often the most difficult aspect of teaching for new instructors. Feel free to assist your protégé with ideas from your classroom; but if you encounter things you have no suggestions for or need additional ideas, this section may be able to help you. **Remember**, encouraging the protégé to be self-reflective is the desired way to help him/her develop methods to handle all problems including classroom management. If problems continue to occur, contact your Content Expert for his/her input.

SOME GENERAL TIPS ON CLASSROOM CONTROL

(Adapted from content provided by Jon Ulmer, Ag Ed Content Expert)

Teachers should create the greatest possible learning situation for Jack and Jill and maintain proper classroom control to make it possible. Try these techniques. Revise as needed:

- Be in the room ahead of time and start the class promptly.
- Utilize the tendencies of students to behave well in a new environment.
- Set standards and limits the first day. Let the students help. Put the standards in writing.
- Learn and use students' names as soon as possible. Pronounce them correctly.
- Be PREPARED! Teacher preparation is critical.
- Be CONSISTENT! Never discipline one time and ignore the next. Never nod to a "pet" with a special privilege.
- Make assignments appropriate for students. Recognize individual differences and vary the kind and amount of assignment to keep everyone working to his/her capacity.
- At the end of a week or two, review the classroom standards.
- Maintain a reserve. Never expose your whole hand. Do not paint yourself into a verbal corner with too many threats or promises. Learn from the example of the solid, unexposed portion of the iceberg.
- Use surprise – an interesting video, an outside speaker, a change in classroom routine. Students like variety that leads to pleasant experiences.
- Make your classroom a place where students practice the kind of behavior that leads to greatest learning. It need not be a mausoleum nor an Armageddon.
- Know what you should do next. Show students that you are "organized."
- When challenged by a student, do not take it personally. Consult your classroom and building standards and follow them impartially.
- Speak with a low, well-modulated voice. Pause and wait if necessary for attention and quiet. Do not try to shout over the noise – it will get worse.
- Ask a misbehaving student a direct question. Look him/her straight in the eye. Follow with another question if necessary.
- Be your strictest at the beginning of the term. You can always loosen up, but tightening up is not easy.

Praise students before the class. Reprimand in private if you must.

- If the whole class gets fidgety and squirmy, change the teaching procedure. Keep a healthful, comfortable room environment.
- Confer often with parents, keep them as partners. You'll need their help with classroom problems.
- See that each student experiences success.

PROBLEM TYPES AND PROBLEM SITUATIONS

If only discipline problems were all the same and had pat answers! But they are not, and they do not. A few problem types follow, along with suggestions for handling. Each type will need some adapting by the problem-ridden teacher.

Students who refuse to do schoolwork. Students who refuse to do schoolwork are most frustrating and annoying to teachers. Unless the problem is resolved, it will mushroom and have a negative effect on the progress of other students and their attitude about schoolwork.

Try these techniques:

1. Students should not be allowed to refuse to do assignments. Obviously, there is a reason for this type of behavior. Speak with the student in private to find out why he/she will not do his/her assignments. Check the student's file. Confer with counselor, principal, or parent.
2. Be sure that the assignments are reasonable and that the student can do the work. Settle for nothing less than honest student performance.
3. Allow the student an opportunity to complete the unfinished assignments within a reasonable time period, but be sure there are consequences.

Students who do school work dishonestly. A student who does his/her schoolwork dishonestly has not only developed a poor habit, but misses learning opportunities. If the student gets away with cheating, others may try the same thing. Try these techniques:

1. Look for signs of cheating. When a student is caught, indicate that you will not accept schoolwork accomplished by cheating.
2. Remove as many temptations as possible for cheating in your classroom.
3. If a student cheats because he/she feels they cannot do work well by doing it honestly, help them realize that they are cheating themselves and that you will only accept work which is done honestly. If the student denies cheating, try to show evidence of your observations of the cheating.
4. If the cheating persists, contact the student's parents for a conference. Include the student in the conference. Share your observations and evidence of cheating. Check for excessive home pressure or unrealistic expectations.
5. Make classroom rewards higher for honest work than for "cribbed" papers.

Students who are restless and fidgety. Fidgety behavior in the classroom interferes with a student's school work as well as annoys others. Most often this restlessness is due to students being nervous, tired, or not having enough schoolwork to do in the classroom. Try these techniques:

1. Review the student's "permanent record" for tips on why he/she behaves this way. A conference with the parents might shed some light.

2. If you find the cause, remove or relieve it by suggesting to parents the cause, or refer the student to the school nurse or counselor. There may be some physical disability affecting the behavior.
3. This is a good place to be flexible. Recognize that some students are physically incapable of sitting still and need opportunities to move about. Plan built-in changes of pace.

Students who are hostile. Most classrooms have at least one student who has a short temper or who expresses hostility. The student most often blames others for the way he/she feels.

Try these techniques:

1. Seat the student near those with whom he/she gets along and as far away from "enemies" as possible.
2. Give the student a chance to "cool off" before trying to find out causes for fights or arguments. A softer, calmer student will be much more receptive to reason. Do not argue with the student.
3. Speak with the student in private. Explain that it is human for people to be angry, but it is unacceptable to exhibit anger in public. If the student blames others, try to reason with him/her.
4. Consult with parents. Indicate your observations of anger and fighting and the consequences it is having on his/her personality, schoolwork, and the attitudes of others toward him/her.
5. Notify the principal. Follow his/her suggestions. If necessary, schedule a student-teacher principal-parent conference.

Students who are "noisy". This discipline problem is one of the most frequent causes of poor classroom control. Try these techniques:

1. Make certain an adequate amount of work is assigned to students. Extra work which is of interest to students should be made available for those who complete assignments early.
2. Stop unwanted noise as soon as it starts. Students will not get quiet on their own.
3. Separate the most talkative.
4. Avoid speaking in a loud voice. Students tend to be "loud" if you are. Speak in moderate or low voice and expect students to do the same.

**Peer Observation
Guidelines**

PEER OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

- Conferencing Skills
- Suggested Guidelines for Observations
- Reflecting Conference
- Peer Observation Log
- Mentor Log

Helpful Suggestions for Peer Observations

Creating a Mentoring Relationship, Conferencing Skills, Guidelines for Observations

And

How to Conduct a Reflecting Conference

Creating a Mentoring Relationship:

- Review Tab. 5: Suggestions for Creating a Mentoring Relationship

Conferencing Skills:

- Set a conferencing date for the first peer observation. This should be done prior to the first Supervision Cycle.
- Review Confidentiality (Tab.4) with your mentee.
- Refer to: Key Attitudes Behind Peer Observations (Tab. 8)
- Have your mentee set clear objectives for the peer observation lesson.
- Refer to and discuss with your mentee: Observational Data Most Frequently Requested By Teachers. This will make your mentee more comfortable than thinking you are critiquing every moment of the lesson. Select and agree on no more than two for the first peer observation lesson.
- Determine what your mentee would like you to observe.
- Have your mentee create a lesson plan with specific objectives. Review the lesson before the peer observation critiquing major flaws in the plan.

Guidelines for Peer Observations:

Read: Suggested Guidelines for Observations. (Tab.8) This article details suggested principles and techniques which will help you in your peer observation.

- It is helpful to use notepaper that has a margin for notes taken during the observation. This will enable you to make short comments, references to time allotment, student speaking and teacher speaking notations.
- Record as much data in your notes as factually and objectively as possible. To make your notes easy to read you must determine a shorthand method before the lesson that is clear to you about which you have abbreviated. There is an example of how data can be recorded in the Collecting Data in Peer Observation article. (Tab.8)

- The peer observer should only intervene in the lesson, and that is agreed upon *before* hand by the mentee, when there is a physical emergency.
- Following the lesson, with your mentees knowledge, immediately review your notes t clarify the shorthand notes you have written. If you wait until the evening to do this you will wonder...what was I talking about.

Reflecting Conference:

- The purpose of peer observations is to assist your mentee in being reflective and analytical about their lesson. Refer to two articles: **Post Questions Following Peer Observation** (Tab. 8) and **Reflective Dialog**. (Tab.8) prior to your reflecting conference with your mentee.
- Read: **Combining Data & Questions Rather Than Judging** to assist you in stimulating reflection on the part of your mentee.
- Elaborate and plan your questions searching for additional details and insights your mentee needs to be reflective about.
- Ask factual questions concerning the data you collected. Ask your mentee what the data tells him/her. Refer to: **Suggested Phrases for Reflective Conversations** (Tab.8) to assist you in your dialogue with your mentee.
- Discuss with your mentee the observational data your mentee asked you to specially look for during the lesson.
- Determine where your mentee would like to advance to next. What would he/she like you to do to help them further evaluate the lesson.
- At the completion of the peer observation make out the Peer Observation Log (Tab.10) having both the mentor and the mentee sign the form.
- Two peer observations must be completed during the mentoring year preferably prior to the Supervision Cycles.
- Review **Bedford's Performance Standards** (Tab.9) with your mentee prior to the first Supervision Cycle.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- ✎ Share conversation over coffee before or after school
- ✎ Stop in for an informal visit: a quick walk through the classroom to look at a particular concern of the new teacher. Before you leave the classroom, jot down a few comments and leave them with the teacher.
- ✎ Team-teach a lesson with the teacher.
- ✎ Invite the new teacher to observe you or another classroom teacher.
- ✎ Offer to teach a lesson in the new teacher's classroom.
- ✎ Encourage new teachers to videotape themselves.
- ✎ Suggest professional literature and other resources to the new teacher.
- ✎ Offer to have a pre- and post-conference with the new teacher in connection with a visit to the classroom.







KEY ATTITUDES BEHIND PEER OBSERVATION

- ❖ We believe in each other's positive motivations
- ❖ We respect the teacher's position as ultimate decision maker
- ❖ We're doing this to help each other grow:
 - ❖ In our teaching repertoires
 - ❖ In our thinking
- ❖ We have something to learn from every other person
- ❖ We trust that if we see something that we're uncomfortable about or don't understand, we will ask about it...and we will do it from the standpoint of genuine curiosity—and an interest in understanding—rather than judgment.

Key Questions Used in Planning the Conference






Ask About the Lesson:

“Tell me about the lesson . . .”

-  What are the objectives of the lesson?
-  What is the sequence of events within the lesson?
-  What has led up to this lesson?
-  What will follow this lesson?
-  What student behaviors do you hope to see/hear?
-  How are the objectives, strategies, and desired outcomes related?





Probe for Concerns:

“Do you have any particular concerns about this lesson?”






-  What are the concerns?
-  Why?
-  Are you trying anything new or different?
-  What made you choose to do so?
-  Do you expect particular student reactions?

Find Out How You Can Help:

“How can I help?”

-  What would you like me to observe for?
-  Is there any particular data I could gather that would help you?
-  How shall I record that?
-  Or would it be helpful if I keep track of by (state method)

Summarize for Clarity:

-  Summarize the objective of the lesson
-  what you will observe for
-  why
-  what data you will gather
-  Confirm the time, place of the observation, and the reflecting conference

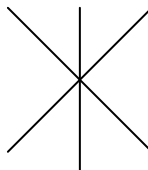
Suggested Guidelines for Observations

The following guidelines suggest principles and techniques which may aid mentors on observing teachers and gathering data:

1. Record as much of what is said and done as possible; record speeches verbatim.
2. Record comments and questions about the teaching marginally (if at all), in some manner that separates them from the raw data.
3. Descriptions of nonverbal behavior should be recorded as factually and as objectively as possible, for example, "Johnny chewed his pencil, Andre passed notes to Sally, and Sally dropped Andre's notes into her desk without reading them," is preferable to, "The children seemed bored."
4. The observer's physical position in the classroom ought simultaneously to be minimally distractive to the pupils and to provide him/her with a different vantage point from the teacher's unless the teacher wants the coach to see the class essentially as he/she sees it. All arrangements should be made in advance.
5. The teacher should expect the mentor to record written data and should understand what the character of the data will be and the reasons for which it is being collected. Observation notes should ordinarily be made accessible to the teacher upon request, especially if the teacher has free time to examine them before the post conference.
6. As a rule, the mentor should not intervene during the lesson.

Collecting Data in Peer Observations

When you are the observer you have to think of yourself as Jack Webb from Dragnet—your job is to collect “the facts, Mam, just the facts.” Be sure to take the time in the planning conference to talk this through with your partner so that the data will be matched to what the teacher wants to utilize after the observation. Here are several examples of the kinds of questions one might be interested in analyzing about his/her lesson and how the data might be recorded to support that analysis.

What Teacher Wants Data About	Method of Recording the Data																									
<p>The teacher wants to examine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are my directions clear?• What kind of questions do I ask?• Which attention moves do I use?• How do I check for understanding?• Which Big Picture moves do I use?• How do I respond when students answer?	<p>1. Literal Notes <i>...capturing in exact words or phrases what the teacher says...</i></p>	<p>“ _____ ”</p>																								
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which students do I call on and/or how often do I call on each?	<p>2. Seating or Floor Plan</p>	<div><div>√√√</div><table><tr><td>√√</td><td></td><td></td><td>√</td><td></td><td>√√</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>√</td><td></td><td></td><td>√√</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>√</td><td>√</td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div># times called on: = student</div> <div></div>	√√			√		√√							√			√√						√	√	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With whom do I spend time:	<p>3. Seating or Floor plan Number might be used in place of √ to track sequence of who is called on or where teacher goes to in which order.</p>	<table><tr><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>10</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	1	4	7	8	2	9	5	6							10				3		11	12		
1	4	7	8	2	9																					
5	6																									
		10																								
3		11	12																							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where am I checking in and/or where do I provide support while students are working?	<p>...With Time</p>	<p>1 8:27 2 8:30 3 8:36</p>																								

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where am I checking in and/or where do I provide support while students are working? 	...or Literal Notes	1 'Why would I put # here?' 2 'What should happen next?' 3 'What happens if...?'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long do I wait after I ask a question? 	4. Literal Notes & Slash Marks / = 1 second	"When did R cry for help?" / / / Fiona "Why do you suppose...?" / / Robin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is time allocated in this period? How long does the transition take? Am I using 10-2 regularly? How long do I teach before I check? 	5. Literal Notes Time Notations in Margin	1:37 "OK. Put books away." "Yesterday..." "There are 3 things you need..." 1:42 "The purpose of this activity..." "Here is how to do it..." 1:44 (All students writing.)

REFLECTING CONFERENCE



AFTER THE LESSON...*the teacher reflects with the observer and ...*

- **Identifies Feelings and Impressions** the teacher describes how she/he felt about the lesson and experiment
- **Recalls Data** the teacher recalls what happened in the lesson to support those feelings and impressions;
- **Requests, Analyzes and Interprets Data** that the observer has collected; the observer shares data and asks related questions;
- **Compares What Was Planned to What Actually Occurred** re: teacher behaviors, student behaviors and student achievement of lesson objectives;
- **Makes Inferences** about what contributed to the success of the lesson or what might have interfered with intended outcomes;
- **Synthesizes and Summarizes** insights and conclusions drawn from this lesson or experiment, and ideas for applications to future lessons;

CLOSING THE CONFERENCE...*the teacher and the observer...*

- **Reflect on the Peer Observation Process** and identify ways to refine the process of working together as peer observers.

Adapted from Art Costa and Robert Garmstone's Cognitive Coaching Model

GIVING HELPFUL FEEDBACK

1. Focus feedback on performance, *not personality*.
2. Focus feedback on observations, *not assumptions*.
3. Focus feedback on description, *not evaluation*.
4. Focus feedback on the specific and concrete, *not the general and abstract*.
5. Focus feedback on the present, *not the past*.
6. Focus feedback on sharing information *rather than giving advice*.



POST QUESTIONS FOLLOWING PEER OBSERVATION

The primary purpose of peer coaching is to help the partner being observed to become more reflective and analytical about his or her classroom practices. Here are several ways of framing questions to use in a conference with a peer following a classroom observation.

Factual questions. Share the data you have collected in your observation and ask: “What does this data tell you?” “What patterns jump out at you in this data?” “How many times did you _____?” (Relate question to information requested by peer.)

Reflective questions. Gather impressions and reactions to the lesson you observed from your peer. Ask “How did you feel about the lesson you taught today?” “What interactions helped make this lesson successful?” “If you were doing this lesson again, what might you leave in/leave out?”

Interpretive questions. Explore the meaning and understanding about teaching that the teacher is developing. “What did you learn from this observation cycle?” “What does the observation mean to you?” “What does the data tell you about yourself as a teacher?”

Elaborative questions. Search for additional details and specific insights. “Can you tell me more about that?” “What exactly do you mean by _____?” “I need more specifics about that.” “Can you help me understand why it is important to _____?”

Decision/Impact Questions. Find out what your peer wants to do with the learning. “What would you like to do with this data now?” “What needs to happen next?”

COMBINING DATA & QUESTIONS RATHER THAN JUDGING

The general pattern here is to share some data, then, if appropriate, ask for the person's feelings, interpretation, or rationale.

"What were you thinking when... How did you feel about it when..."

Examples of observer's questions that stimulate reflection:

1. Questions that clarify observed actions, events, or statements...

"When it was time for the review and summary of the lesson you had intended to have students write an entry in their learning logs. Instead what you did was to pair them up and have them interview one another about what they had learned. What made you decide to change your plan?"

2. Questions that clarify tone or feeling associated with a particular situation...

"You asked me to pay attention to the directions you gave when you set up the activity. I noticed that you started talking much more quickly when you described what you wanted students to be concentrating on in their groups. What do you recall about that?"

3. Questions that clarify the reasons and intended consequences of observed actions, events, or statements...

"You asked me to note the ways in which you responded to students' answers. When Paula was explaining how the action in the story shifted, you stopped her in the middle of her answer and asked Ken what he thought. What was your intention when you did that?"

4. Questions that ask about the reasons for repeated patterns or incidents of the same nature...

"I noticed that each time you went back to the circle you always knelt down in the same spot. Was there a particular reason for that?"

5. Questions that connect an observation with a past conversation or events.

"When you called on Deb she said, 'Why would you ask me that?' Was that the kind of reaction you were telling me about when we were discussing Deb?"

"You mentioned earlier that Andy was one of the kids who usually doesn't participate. I noted that he talked and offered ideas 4 times during the discussion. How does that compare to what you have seen before? What do you think might have contributed to his participation today?"

Suggested Phrases For Reflective Conversations.

1. Door Openers

- “I’d be interested to hear how you feel.”
- “I’ve got the time if you have. Want to talk?”
- “I’m ready to show what I observed.”

2. Passive Listening

The coach’s willingness to keep quiet is usually understood as evidence of interest and concern. Silence is a potent tool for getting people to talk occasional acknowledgments show attention.

- Look at speaker, nodding
- “I see what you mean”
- “Mm-hmmmmmm”
- “Interesting”
- “Tell me more”

3. Factual Feedback

Use evidence from your observations as you back the aspects of the lesson the teacher chose as his/her focus. Don’t bring in peripheral issues. Assist the teacher in interpreting the results and developing alternatives for future situations.

- “Here’s what I saw and heard. What do you think?”
- “What were you pleased with?”
- “What would you change if you were to do this again?”
- “Could you tell me more about...?”
- “How would you use the same strategy in a different situation?”

4. Active Listening

This technique helps the teacher reflect and ensures clearer communication. It involves frequent and continuous feedback to the person talking. It tests accuracy and shows proof of understanding. The listener restates the sender’s message. It is confirmed or corrected. It requires patience.

- “It seems that you got the results you wanted.”
- “You’re feeling pleased/disappointed.”
- “What do you think is...”
- “Tell me if I understand it correctly...”

~ Peer Observation Log ~

We believe in each other's positive motivations~ We respect the teacher's position as ultimate decision maker~ We're doing this to help each other grow in our teaching repertoires and in our thinking~ We have something to learn from every other person~ We trust that if we see something that we are uncomfortable about or don't understand, we will ask about it... and we will do it from the standpoint of genuine curiosity and an interest in understanding- rather than judgment.

Name of mentor _____

Name of beginning teacher _____

Date of planning conference _____

Specific information mentor is to gather _____

Date of observation _____

Data collection method used _____

Date of reflecting conference _____

Mentor's signature _____

Beginning teacher's signature _____

Peer observations are informal observations between the mentor and their beginning teacher. Notes and the content of the observation are a confidential part of the mentoring relationship. Thoughts, comments and feedback about the peer observation process may be provided to the Mentor Facilitator and Superintendent in the reflective essay to be written and passed in at the end of the school year.

Mentor Log

Your name (mentor) _____

New teacher (mentee) _____

[illegible]

[illegible]