

## **EDUCATIVE MENTORING**

### Characteristics of mentoring as a form of individualized professional development

- Face-to-face, close-to-the-classroom work on teaching
- Centered in practice (real time, artifacts of)
- Situated in a professional relationship of trust, support and accountability
- Directed toward promoting more effective teaching and learning

### Core practices of mentoring

1. Observing and scripting lessons
2. Developing a focus for the work
3. Planning mentoring conversations
4. (Co) constructing a mentoring “curriculum” focused on teacher learning
5. Enacting educative mentoring conversations
6. Adjusting one’s mentoring stance to fit the needs of the situation
7. Assessing (novice) teacher learning
8. Giving strategic feedback

### Mentoring tools

- Teaching standards
- Developmental continuum
- Collaborative log
- Template for scripting lessons

### Forms of mentoring

- Observation and co-observation
- Analytic, reflective conversations
- Co-planning lessons, units
- Co-teaching lessons
- Analysis of “records of practice” (i.e. student work, classroom videos)
- Setting professional learning goals
- Investigating problems of practice
- Formative assessment

## **Linking Observation and Conversation in Mentored Learning to Teach**

### **Scripting a Lesson**

How can we document the details of a lesson in ways that support the intellectual work of helping a teacher develop and improve her practice?

In scripting a lesson, we can attend to the flow of ideas, observe patterns of discourse (i.e. who talk, to whom and when) and chart changes in activities. But scripting is of limited value in and of itself. *It is how a mentor uses the script that determines its educative value.*

Looking across the notes taken, a mentor can begin to identify substantive issues that emerge in the lesson and can serve as the basis for helpful discussion. Or the mentor can identify a generative question what will help the teacher reflect on the underlying purposes of the lesson. The emphasis in scripting is on the *uses* one will make of the script to support thoughtful examination of practice and the underlying purposes of teaching.

### **Scripting Suggestions**

1. Chart the basic structure or flow of the lesson.
2. Note main activities or tasks of the lesson.
3. Try to script some teacher-student interactions.
4. Separate out but keep track of your impressions and questions.

The generic form below may help facilitate your taking fieldnotes on a lesson.

<b>Flow of Activity or Conversation</b>	<b>Impressions, Questions</b>

## Reflecting on the Lesson, Developing Themes

A mentor's diligence in observing and noticing sets the stage for future conversations. One way to think about what a mentor can offer a novice in her noticing is to make a distinction between two types of "seeing more." Often a mentor is able to "see more" because she is not preoccupied with the demanding cognitive tasks of managing a classroom, responding to learners and making instructional decisions. But beyond seeing "more" in quantitative terms, a mentor is often able to see "more" in terms of her prior experience and knowledge. In this case, her seeing "more" is a qualitatively different type of seeing – her knowledge and experience allows her to be aware of complexities of nuances that may not be all that accessible to the novice.

Jerome Bruner talks about this type of "seeing" that a mentor has as a "consciousness for two," assuming that what is seen or noticed by the more experienced teacher will then become the basis for a conversation together. A mentor is able to see more because she has developed her ability to attend to what is happening in a lesson in terms of what Dewey refers to as "mind activity."

Consider this description of observation by Dewey. (When Dewey refers to "the student," he is referring to a novice teacher).

...The student (teacher) should not be observing to find out how the good teacher does it, in order to accumulate a store of methods by which he may also teach successfully. He should rather observe with reference to seeing the interaction of mind, to see how teacher and pupils react upon each other – how mind answers to mind...What the student (teacher) most needs at this stage of growth is ability to see what is going on in the minds of a group of persons who are in intellectual contact with one another. He needs to learn to observe psychologically – a very different thing from simply observing how a teacher gets 'good results' in presenting any subject matter. (Dewey, 1904, p. 324.)

As you respond to the questions which follow, think about whether or not the questions help you see "more." You can also use the questions to help you develop a central issue or focus for a mentoring conversation.

### Noticing the learners:

- What are students doing in this lesson?
- Can you make any inferences about what the students may be learning? What do you see that makes you think so?
- What words or phrases might you use to describe the students' engagement in the lesson or in particular segments of the lesson?

### Noticing the activities:

- How would you describe the task(s) or activities which the teacher has developed for the lesson?
- What kind of thinking does each activity or task seem to foster or develop in the students?

#### Noticing the teacher's enactment of her role and beliefs

- Based on your observation, how do you think the teacher is defining the role of teacher? Why?
- What do you think the teacher notices about students' understanding in this lesson? What makes you think so?
- How does the teacher respond to students' understanding in this lesson? What does s/he do? What does s/he say?
- From observing the teacher, can you draw any inferences about his/her beliefs about teaching and learning?

#### Noticing the teacher's enactment of purposes and pedagogy

- What inferences can you draw about the teacher's purposes in teaching this lesson? What do you see that supports your interpretation?
- What teaching skills or core practices do you notice the teacher using?
- Are there any skills or practices that you think need further work?

#### **Structuring a Mentoring Conversation**

1. What themes or issues seem to emerge from your work with the questions above?
2. What kind of conversation do you want to have with the teacher? What would you want to help the teacher "see" along with you?
3. What will be the focus of your conversation? Why did you choose this focus?
4. Try to locate this focus in the teaching standards and elements.
5. How can you use the observational record to communicate what you have "seen" in the lesson?
6. How could you initiate the conversation?

