

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHERYL DELSIGNORE
STAFFING/MENTOR COORDINATOR
HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE



DR. JOHN E. DURKIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
20 IRVING STREET
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609-2493
(508) 799-3027
FAX (508) 799-3666

TO: Teacher Mentors

FROM: Cheryl DelSignore

SUBJECT: Mentoring Throughout the Year: A Friendly Reminder

I am writing this letter to update you regarding your responsibilities as a mentor teacher. Thank you for supporting/encouraging new hires to our profession. Your obligation is to help, mentor, support and advise the new teacher(s) assigned to you for the school year.

Remember you must keep a mentor/mentee log of hours. Mentor logs are passed in to me in December and April. The passed in logs and attendance at these meetings are required in order to receive the mentor stipends. If the log does not match with your assigned mentee(s)' logs, stipends may be withheld.

You can download all WPS Mentor information including the *Mentor/Mentee* log by going to the Worcester Public School home page, Human Resources web page then click on *Mentor/Mentee*.

Please be sure to download Packet I and Packet II and share this with your mentee as well.

I look forward to seeing you at the required September, December and April meetings. You will receive notification reminders via email as to dates and time options. This information, of course, is included in the *Mentor/Mentee Program for 2014* link.

Thank you again and if you have any questions please feel free to call me at 508-799-3027.

We Are All on the Same Team!

Roles & Responsibilities continued...

Mentors

- Lead by example
- Serve as an advocate
- Serve as a resource
- Maintain a confidential relationship with the new teacher
- Provide a variety of perspectives rather than only own perspective
- Serve as the "go-to" person
- Model analytical and reflective practice
- Implement guidelines established by district and school
- Serve as member of mentoring team if a teaming approach is used in your school or district
- Keep colleagues informed about mentoring initiatives
- Engage colleagues in welcoming, supporting, and collaborating with new staff members

Novice Teachers

- Seek out help
- Observe other teachers teaching, planning, reflecting, and conferencing
- Ask why things are done the way they are
- Self-assess and self-adjust as data dictates
- Set quarterly professional goals and reflect on and analyze the accomplishment of those goals
- Participate in professional development opportunities
- Demonstrate a willingness to watch, listen, and learn
- Share own expertise gained from recent university and student experiences
- Take the initiative in getting to know principal
- Get to know the front office staff
- Avoid negativity
- Join and actively participate in support groups

We Are All on the Same Team!

Roles & Responsibilities continued...

Experienced Teachers New to District, School, Team, or Department

- Seek out help
- Demonstrate a willingness to watch, listen, and learn
- Observe other teachers teaching, planning, reflecting, and conferencing
- Ask why things are done the way they are
- Diplomatically share past experiences that can help inform practice in this new setting
- Participate in professional development opportunities
- Agree to serve on committees and task forces in areas of professional interest and/or school focus

Through the Voice of New Teachers...

Messages for New Teachers

If I could say one thing to next year's new teachers that would help make their year a success, I would say...

- You are a teacher. Now, remember what it was like to be young and trying to learn hard, new things every day, and you will be a good teacher. Patience, a smile, and sense of humor go a long way.
- Don't be shy about asking for help.
- You've got the whole year ahead of you, pace yourself. If you don't ask, the answer is "no."
- Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are unclear about something. Also, don't be afraid to exhibit your own individual teaching styles and techniques. We should always be able to learn from each other.
- Talk to other teachers. Get to know teachers on your hallway. Finally, remember you are not alone when you have a problem in class or with a student.
- Relax. Take things as they come. Find out what needs to be done first and get that done. Laugh!
- Organize a filing system and pick one day a week to file and organize all your papers.
- Be open to suggestions.
- Communicate with fellow teachers, administration, parents and departments often. Ask questions to clarify expectations and follow through on information given.
- It is going to be tough, but you can do it! When in doubt, ask lots of questions and don't give up. Have fun with your students and staff.
- Grade a couple of assignments daily. Papers can pile up before your eyes.
- Sit down with your mentor at the beginning of each quarter to look at the school calendar. Then prioritize and schedule all of your duties and tasks. Enjoy the year!
- Ask questions! Ask questions! Ask questions!
- Stay on top of paperwork. It can get away from you. Ask questions of your mentor. That's what they are there for.
- Develop a relationship with someone who is positive and willing to offer advice, someone who has a few years' experience and can give insight.
- Make one day out of your weekend a "school-free" day. Work expands to fill the space allowed.
- Make sure that you make the most of official and unofficial mentors. There are many people in this organization who are willing to assist you. All you have to do is ask.

Through the Voice of New Teachers...

Messages for New Teachers continued...

- Take one day at a time! Believe in yourself! Take time for yourself!
- Make sure to ask your mentors questions if you have them. There is so much new information thrown at you, it is hard to sort it all out at first. Everyone was very willing to help. You just have to ask.
- Be proactive and don't be afraid to ask questions and/or raise concerns.
- Find someone in your grade who can share ideas, resources, advice, etc. with you.
- Learn your needs: instructional, environmental, administrators' expectations, etc. Take the steps necessary to meet these needs and don't be afraid to ask. Many people are here to help. Help them help by asking.
- Don't be afraid to ask your mentor for help. That's what they are there for!
- Learn from your mistakes! Use all of your resources! Plan, plan, plan! Don't hesitate to ask for help!
- Ask, don't hesitate! The best resources are your fellow colleagues! Take notes. Use your agenda binder. There's too much information to remember.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Once you ask, then everyone will help.
- Set up a time to meet with your mentor each week. At the beginning of the year, go over the expectations for you and your mentor so that you know what to expect. They are getting PAID to help you!
- Use your mentor as a sounding board for your concerns, questions and even successes. They are there to help, listen and support you. Make the effort even if they don't.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and ask for help when you need it.
- Tell everyone "Hi" with a smile. Making a positive first impression on even teachers/administrators you do not work with helps people remember your face!
- Listen and learn from experienced teachers.
- Make sure you understand what happens when you escalate a behavioral issue. Where does the referral go? How is the assistant principal responding? What is the next step or expected outcome?
- Take advantage of your mentor or another veteran teacher who is near your classroom.

Mentor-New Teacher Interactions

The Bottom Line

So, exactly what is a mentor supposed to do? The short answer is, whatever it takes to help ensure that there is a fully qualified and satisfied teacher in every classroom. This chapter provides dozens of possible discussion points and interactions for mentor-new teacher work. In addition to words of wisdom from new teachers and mentors, suggested support systems for potential challenges and concerns of new teachers are provided. The support systems in this chapter are organized in categories adapted from Camp and Heath-Camp's Teacher Proximity Continuum for beginning career and technical educators. Let's begin with some basic information about the logistics of mentor-new teacher interactions.

Communication Possibilities

- Face-to-face interactions including conversations, meetings, conferences, co-teaching, and socialization
- Peer observations
- Telephone/email conversations with novice teacher
- Peer observations
- Written communication including notes and dialogue journals
- Professional development and networking opportunities
- On-line mentoring

Frequency of Interaction

- The frequency of interaction depends on the needs of the new teachers and district requirements and expectations.
- Guidelines for frequency of interaction with novice teachers are
 - As much as possible before school starts
 - Once a day during the first month of school
 - Two to three times a week throughout the first semester
 - At least once a week throughout the second semester
- Guidelines for frequency of interaction with experienced teachers new to the district, as well as second and third year teachers are
 - As much as possible before school starts
 - Once a day during the first week of school
 - Once a week throughout the rest of the school year
 - More as needed

Through the Voice of New Teachers...

Messages for Mentors

If I could say one thing to next year's mentors about supporting new teachers, I would say...

- Be available for your new teacher. The first year of teaching is extremely overwhelming.
- Help your new teacher prioritize and schedule duties and tasks each quarter.
- Definitely make time to observe your new teacher or have your new teacher observe you. Even if you think you are bothering your new teacher, you're really helping.
- Have special events in the morning to facilitate communication, check-in, or to brainstorm ideas teachers could use that day (i.e., small breakfast, etc.).
- As a mentor, your "teachings" and support have a far-reaching and profoundly important effect because they touch every student that this new teacher will ever instruct. Thank you for being there.
- Be "there" without being too pushy.
- Tell new teachers to always have a back-up plan in mind in case students just don't get the lesson.
- Stay in contact daily with your new teacher for the first two weeks of school.
- Set your calendars for regularly scheduled meetings.
- You're going to learn about as much as you teach. If you want to keep what you've got, you've got to give it away.
- All mentors need to help new teachers with testing procedures and test administration.
- Let new teachers know they can come to you with any questions or concerns.
- Be patient, open, welcoming, and be available.
- Don't wait on new teachers to come to you with concerns; be proactive and check with them frequently.
- Help new teachers set up their classrooms. This is most helpful because there is so much to be done and so many meetings to attend that first week.
- Make sure you're willing to answer lots of questions. There is so much information thrown at new teachers, it is very difficult for them to keep it all straight. Many times they won't realize they have questions until they're in the middle of it.
- Get organized before you start.
- Meet with your new teacher weekly even if it's just for lunch or a quick chat. Try not to play the role of an evaluator as you help your new teacher. You should be their peer.
- As a mentor, you become their seeing-eye dog. You guide them through all the expected and unexpected ups and downs of the school year— personally and professionally.

Through the Voice of New Teachers...

Messages for Mentors

- Interaction is the key. Keep an open-door policy complemented with daily communication.
- Remember that we have not been here, so anytime someone says, "Just like last year," your new teacher has no clue what to do!
- Please make sure you check on your new teacher periodically. It really makes us feel like someone cares about how our year is going.
- Spend time with your new teacher. Set aside a weekly time to just talk, not always at school. Also, plan lessons together. Be sure s/he observes other disciplines.
- Do not assume too much. Make an effort to have at least several weekly contacts with the new teacher.
- Make sure your new teacher knows you from the beginning. It's a very tough transition to school from the outside world and they need help!
- Definitely assist your new teachers in any way possible. At the same time, however, allow them to work towards their own individual teaching style and approach.
- Have a cup of coffee with your new teacher so they know that your interactions are more than being under a microscope.
- Just be there and listen.
- Let your new teacher know that you are available for help or, if you don't know the answer to a question, help him/her find the answer.
- Be there to support your new teacher's questions, concerns and successes. They need someone to talk to and share what happens in and out of the classroom. Make the effort and take the time to get to know your new teacher.
- Be more pro-active with your new teachers. Ask them what specific help they need and then follow through!
- Often both parties don't know exactly what is needed. That can be more easily found by building a close professional relationship.
- Continue to support new teachers throughout the year, not just at the beginning.
- Reinforce the breath of fresh air newcomers bring to the profession. Listen to their ideas for new projects to try.
- During your 'formal' meeting once a week, have your new teacher plan what you will talk about one week and the mentor plan the next week.
- Make sure your new teacher has a reasonable course-pacing guide and feed him/her an occasional worksheet.
- Let the new teacher know that you will probably learn as much from him/her as he/she will from you!

Responses to Potential New Teacher Challenges and Concerns

Personal

A quick review of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs reminds us that our physiological needs, safety needs, and need for love and belonging must be met before we can turn our energy to developing competency and maximizing our potential. Mentors can play an important role in minimizing new teachers' concerns in this area and creating the conditions under which new teachers can more quickly focus on competency and potential. See the **Personal** section for each month in **Chapter V, Mentoring Calendar**.

Suggestions for supporting new teachers on a personal level:

- Spend time getting to know each other as human beings. Take notes and then introduce them to others on the staff who have the same interests and hobbies or come from the same part of the country.
- When new teachers are moving into the area, offer tips on finding a place to live, the most convenient super market, library, post office, gym, and best restaurants. In over 70 cities you can point them to www.craigslist.org as an incredible source of information about housing and other local issues.
- Have everyone (staff, students, custodians, etc.) in the school wear name tags for the first two weeks of school so that everyone gets to know everyone.
- Celebrate birthdays...theirs, yours, George Washington's, or Eleanor Roosevelt's.
- Set a fixed time for getting together each week such as meeting for coffee on Tuesdays or a cup of tea after work on Thursdays.
- Be a professional role model.
- Escort them to faculty, team, department, or committee meetings and sit with them at the meetings until they establish their own network of collegial friends.
- Use humor.
- Be available just to listen; keep an open door.
- Send a note, a flower, a muffin, or a candy bar to commemorate special days like the 100th day, supervisory observations, first day of quarter or trimester, pi day, Cinco de Mayo, the start of Daylight Savings Time, or for no reason at all.
- Give the new teacher your home phone or cell phone number.
- Note, encourage, and validate efforts in the interest of student learning.
- Bolster their confidence and provide moral support, especially on bad days.
- Let them know that everyone feels overwhelmed at one time or another.
- Do not stifle fresh idealistic attitudes.
- Do not gossip.
- Check on a daily basis to see how they are doing.
- Show them where to park.

Responses to Potential New Teacher Challenges and Concerns

- Help them navigate whatever bureaucratic roadblocks they encounter.
- Take them to lunch before school opens or on a workday
- Have the PTA send new teachers a rose after the first day of school with a note saying something like, "You made it!"
- Have the PTA send a plant after the first week with a note welcoming them to the school community.
- Keep a folder or notebook of the new teacher's work and/or student work. Use a digital camera to capture images of the classroom, the teacher, and the students at work. This collection makes a great end-of-the-year celebration of the accomplishments of the new teacher's first year at the school.

Through the Voice of Mentors...

What Do You Do When Your New Teacher

Does not have the same planning period?

- Use e-mail
- Use phone calls
- Use work days
- Use before and/or after school meetings
- Talk over lunch
- Treat him/her to a cup of coffee or drink after work

Does not want to meet or routinely cancels appointments?

- Let the new teacher set the next meeting time/date
- Meet informally, outside of school
- Get to the reason; ask what the issues are
- Provide food at the meetings

Does not seem to feel a need for your assistance?

- Continue to make new teacher aware of time line issues (e.g., grade meetings, policies, procedures, etc.)
- Schedule weekly or bi-weekly meeting times
- Don't use e-mail to correspond; go to their location to talk face-to-face
- Make yourself available during hectic times (e.g., report card preparation time, the days before parent conferences, etc.)
- Perhaps the new teacher's years of experience result in his/her not needing as much assistance
- Observe the new teacher informally
- Schedule an observation to provide topics for discussion/reflection
- Have the new teacher draft the quarterly summary report
- Explain that being part of a mentor-new teacher team is part of being a professional
- Emphasize the differences between policies and practices from division to division and the importance of understanding policies and practices
- Be direct: "You do need to have a mentor."
- Note the importance of knowing who's who in the division and how to use diplomacy to "work the system."
- Get together informally in casual settings
- Share/swap lesson plans and resources
- Build trust by honoring confidentiality
- Use open-ended questions: pose scenarios (e.g., "How would you handle...?")
- Suggest joint work sessions on tasks (e.g., report card preparation, etc.)
- Propose swapping portfolios as a way of idea-sharing

Responses to Potential New Teacher Challenges and Concerns

Parents

Novice teachers often do not fully understand the necessity of setting up positive partnerships with parents until there is a problem for which they need parental support or until a parent wants teacher support. New experienced teachers may encounter a set of parent expectations quite different from those of the parents of students in previous schools. This may manifest itself in parents who want to be overly involved or in parents who are unaware of how to work productively with the school. It is the responsibility of mentors to ensure that new teachers are aware of and address the responsibility of working with parents early in the year so that these relationships do not become huge challenges and concerns later in the year. See the **Parents** section for each month in **Chapter V, Mentoring Calendar**.

Suggestions for supporting new teachers in building their relationships with and working with parents as partners:

- Take the new teachers on a tour of the neighborhood to help them gain perspective on attendance area demographics.
- Provide examples of introductory letters to parents.
- Provide models, either your own or a collection from other teachers, of newsletters and letters home to parents designed to convey on-going information about classroom learning and school events.
- Suggest that parents be invited in as guest speakers or volunteers.
- Recommend positive telephone calls home.
- Assist in writing comments for report cards.
- Discuss individual parent problems as they occur.
- Share ideas on objectives and agendas for Open House or Back-to-School Night.
- Talk about unique features of parent conferences with special needs students.
- Show beginners how to document a problem situation before bringing it to the attention of a parent.
- Sit in on initial or difficult parent conferences.
- Invite beginner to sit in on one of your parent conferences.
- Conduct a mock parent conference after the first month of school to provide practice. Switch playing roles of both the teacher and the parent.
- Use student agendas for communication.
- Discuss the home visit process.

See pages 253-266 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?* for tips on creating positive and productive relationships with parents.

Through the Voice of Mentors...

What Do You Do When Your New Teacher

Does not teach the same grade level?

- Hook up with the appropriate grade level/subject area person
- Use peer coaching techniques
- Make arrangements to observe a class together
- Join your two classes by having the students pair up as "book buddies."
- Schedule before-or-after-school time together
- Use e-mail to communicate (but not exclusively)
- Focus professional conversations on general teaching practices applicable across grade levels/subject areas (e.g., management, differentiation, portfolio-keeping, etc.)

Is special education and you are general education?

- Employ the same strategies as used when grade levels differ (see above)
- Some inclusion issues are shared by both; the special education person could help the general education person

Is very stressed?

- Go on an outing away from school
- Introduce him/her to others who can help
- Offer problem-solving suggestions
- Use food as a special treat
- Adjust expectations
- Share a joke, hug

Is having difficulty establishing relationships with other members of the department or grade level team?

- Establish norms for behavior/communication; remind new teacher of the nature of professional relationships
- Brainstorm situations and solutions
- Work on developing/improving "people skills"
- Go directly to the person(s)
- Remind teacher of any "chain of command" that exists
- Establishing relationships takes time and professional/emotional maturity, just be patient
- Encourage the new teacher to stand up for him/herself
- Encourage participation in/establishment of "happy hour" event(s)
- Encourage contributions to/participation in assignments that the group must complete or respond to cooperatively
- Share your experiences in getting to know new colleagues

Through the Voice of Mentors...

What Do You Do When Your New Teacher

- Find and emphasize common interests within the group
- Make time for team-building
- Consider whether “backing off” the problem is the best response

Is having difficulty with organizational and management issues?

- Offer room organization suggestions, emphasizing student-friendly arrangements
- Label basic expectations
- Have new teacher visit other classrooms
- Video tape the new teacher's instruction and reflect on the tape jointly
- Teach the use of binders, folders, and other organizational tools

Has one or more really difficult students and does not have the skills or support needed to work with them effectively?

- Model work with such students
- Arrange observations of other classes
- Put the new teacher in touch with team members
- Remind new teacher of the “chain of command”
- Review differentiation strategies
- Suggest ways to involve the parent(s)
- Suggest ways to communicate one-on-one with the student(s) after class
- Explain use of “proximity” as a management tool
- Be sure expectations and consequences are clear and consistent

Is saying, “Everything is fine,” and you don't know what to do?

- Set an agenda for meetings with the new teacher
- Be prepared with conversation-starting questions for the new teacher and use follow-up questions
- Have meetings in a casual setting (e.g., over lunch or after-school “happy hour”)
- Offer to observe the new teacher's instruction
- Ask the new teacher to share something that is working and something that is not working
- Describe the challenges/obstacles you face in the job of teaching
- Share ideas and/or resource materials
- Don't ask, “Is everything okay?” Ask more open-ended questions that invite professional conversations/reflection

Through the Voice of Mentors...

What Do You Do When Your New Teacher

Has not been able to schedule/engage in the peer observation process?

- Set a deadline by which observations must have been done
- Help the new teacher prepare substitute plans

Is not dressing or acting professionally?

- Give the new teacher a "heads up" about the problem
- Lay it on the line (be direct)

Is having problems communicating with parents?

- Model how to communicate with parents
- Establish a format to follow when communicating with parents
- Alert the new teacher to situations to look out for
- Suggest that you or another appropriate teacher/staff member join the new teacher for conferences with parents
- Encourage the new teacher to document parent communications carefully

Is talking about leaving the teaching profession?

- Have a heart-to-heart talk with the new teacher about his/her thinking
- Determine the reason(s) for this thinking
- Suggest resources to help with frustrations
- Consider that this decision may be appropriate for this person

Needs help saying "No" to requests to take on additional responsibilities?

- Help the new teacher understand that it's okay to say "No"
- Encourage his/her use of, "Let me think about it" as a response

Responses to the stem "What Do You Do When..." provided by Alexandria City Schools, VA, mentors.

TOP TEN QUESTIONS

to focus discussions of the teaching & learning process

1. What should **students know and be able to do** as a result of this lesson? How are these objectives related to national, state, and/or district standards?
2. How do **students demonstrate what they know and what they can do**? Are there multiple forms of assessment including **student self-assessment**? What are the **assessment criteria** and what form do they take?
3. How does the teacher **find out** what **students already know (preassessment)**, and how does she help them access and use what they know and have experienced both inside and outside the classroom? How do learners not only **build on prior experiences** but **deal with misconceptions and naive understandings** and **reframe their thinking** when appropriate?
4. How are new knowledge, concepts and skills introduced? How is data about the **diversity** of the students and from the **task analysis** used to select from a wide variety of sources and presentation modes?
5. How do students **process (make meaning)** of their learning? What are the key questions, activities, and assignments (in class or homework)?
6. What are the **formative assessments** or **checks for student understanding** during the lesson? How is the data from those assessments used to inform teaching decisions?
7. How is instruction **differentiated** so that the learning experiences are productive for all students?
8. How is the learning framed so that **students know the objectives**, the **rationale** for the objectives and activities, the directions and procedures, as well as the **assessment task and criteria** at the beginning of the learning process?
9. How are opportunities for students to make **real world connections** and to learn and use **varied and complex thinking skills** built into the learning experience?
10. What arrangements/adjustments are made to create a positive and productive **learning environment**? How is **data** being used to make these decisions?

Mentoring in a Standards-Based Environment

Standards-Based versus Standards-Referenced

We would all like to believe that we are standards-based in our instructional decision-making and practices but the reality is that few of us can call ourselves **standards-based**. What we can say is that we are all at least **standards-referenced**. That is, many of us refer to the standards to see if we can justify what we had planned to teach based on teachers' manuals, on programs purchased by the district or on what we've have "always" done. Mentors have an important responsibility for being clear about what it means to be standards-based as opposed to standards-referenced so that they can provide appropriate guidance to new teachers. The good news is that most new teachers can readily engage in practices that are **standards-based** because they have no "old habits," units, lessons, or activities to give up.

What Mentors Need to Know About Being Standards-Based

The stages of being **standards-based** are as follows:

- Knowing that the standards exist
- Knowing where to find a copy
- Reading the standards
- Posting the standards
- Occasionally referring to the standards during planning and with students
- Checking to see if what is being taught can be found in the standards
- Beginning to understand the power and focus the standards provide and working to identify the essential understandings that are embedded in and that transcend the standards as they are written in the documents
- Being able to say "I am **standards-based** because I used the standards to design assessments and instruction, and I used student work to judge whether or not the instruction was well designed for this content with these learners."

The first six bullets are more representative of **standards-referenced** than they are of **standards-based**. We have to include the last two bullets before we can say that we are **standards-based**.

Mentoring in a Standards-Based Environment continued...

The Focus Is Always on Student Learning

If we are in fact standards-based, the focus is always on student learning and the statement **"I have so much to cover."** is replaced by **"I need to structure learning opportunities so that all students can learn at a high level."** and **"The analysis of my students' work informs my decision-making about instructional practice."** It is true that the amount of information and the number of skills we and the new teachers are asked to ensure that the learners master is mind-boggling. Given that, we need to be sure that every single learning experience in which the students are engaged is not only an interesting activity, but also the right exercise for moving their learning forward. Just because exercise is next in the textbook or teammates have been using it for years, is not sufficient reason for having students continue to do it. The next exercise, or the long projects, may be just what is called for as the next lesson, but we have to ask the following questions:

- **Is this the right lesson for these students right now?**
- **Given the school-year time frame, is this learning experience worthy of the time it will cost?**
- **Is there another way to approach this learning that might work better for these learners or be more efficient in moving them along?**

Teachers in their first years of teaching find it incredibly difficult to know the answers to these questions, so it is essential that as they move through those first years we help them as they consider these questions.

All Students Are Expected to Achieve at a High Level

At the same time the standards movement was sweeping across the land, IDEA made legally imperative what was already our moral responsibility. We are required to ensure that all students have access to the same rich curriculum and that they all be held to the same level of understanding. The implications for mentors and new teachers alike are huge. The percentage of students who have been labeled as "special needs" and the percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) is staggering. This mandate and these students are the reason we hear so much about **differentiation of instruction**. While experienced teachers new to the district may be ready for focused mentoring and collaboration around differentiation, novice teachers must first master the incredible knowledge base and complex skills of teaching before they can provide multiple pathways to learning. Mentors need to focus on helping new teachers build solid repertoires of research-based instructional strategies and then gradually coach them in using multiple strategies simultaneously.

Mentoring in a Standards-Based Environment continued...

Using Assessment Results to Inform Practice

Are the students learning? We need to coach new teachers in the gathering and analysis of **preassessment** or baseline data about what students know and can do as they enter the learning experience. We have to help them use that data analysis to design learning experiences at which students can be successful. Few new teachers have had extensive training in the ongoing gathering and use of **formative assessment data** so they need help learning to use every piece of student work, all student responses, and student questions as data sources about how well students are learning. In a standards-based classroom, even **summative assessments** become data sources because we can determine whether or not individual students have mastered or are moving toward mastery of the identified standards. The question we must teach new teachers to ask is not did the students complete all the assignments and do their homework, **but rather, did they learn what they were supposed to learn, did they retain it over time, and can they use it in ways that demonstrate understanding at a high level.**

Standards-Based Planning Process

Planning in a standards-based environment is often described as "beginning with the end in mind." Teachers have always planned with an end in mind. Often though, the end we had in mind was to work our way through the book, chapter by chapter, or through the year, project by project. In a standards-based environment, mentors have to work closely with new teachers to ensure that they understand that the end they should have in mind is not completion of a particular activity or project, chapters in a book, or a packaged program, but is instead mastery of the learning standards identified by the state and the district.

Just like we have a clear picture of that perfect vacation, car, wedding, or ad campaign, we need to have a clear picture of what it looks like when our students are competent in what we want them to know and be able to do. Just as that vacation, wedding, or ad campaign will not happen without an action plan, we need an action plan for guiding our students to be able to demonstrate the learning we have in mind for them. The first step in this planning process, both inside and outside the classroom, is identifying the outcome we want. The second step is creating our vision of what it looks like when we get there. Next we analyze the outcome and vision to figure out what we have to do in the third step in order to accomplish the first and second steps. It makes no sense to start the third step without **THE END** in mind. As mentors we have the opportunity to ensure that new educators begin their professional practice thinking and planning this way.

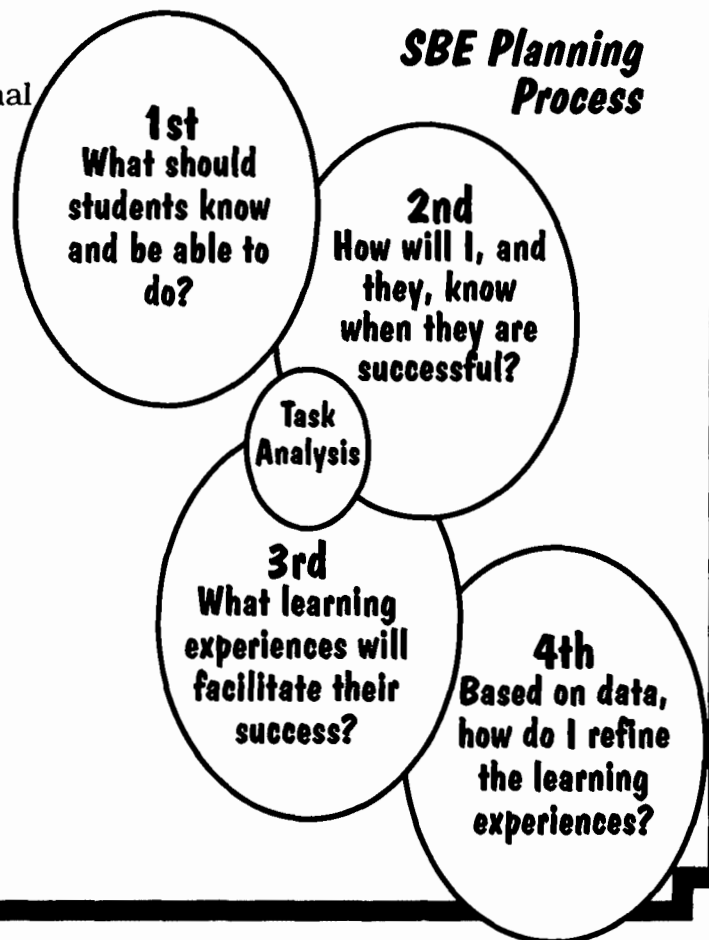
Mentoring in a Standards-Based Environment continued...

In this chapter the **Guidelines for Unit Design**, a list of concepts to use in forming generalizations and essential understandings, and the **Top Ten Questions to Focus Discussions of the Teaching and Learning Process** provide a big picture look at the key ideas for mentoring in a standards-based environment. These pages elaborate on the four steps in the Standards-Based (SBE) Planning Process. See SBE Planning Process graphic below.

There is an extensive array of best practices to note, suggestions to make, and reflective questions to ask on each of six areas: planning instruction, implementing instruction, assessing instruction, orchestrating a positive learning-centered environment, organizing a productive learning-centered environment, and professionalism and collegial collaboration. There are references to where these issues are discussed in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?* and *Instruction for All Students* as well as in other recommended print and web resources.

See **Chapter XIII, Tools for Instructional Planning** for templates to use as resources with new teachers. See also **Chapter X, Tools for New Teachers** for self-assessments in each of the six areas listed above. Use these self-assessments with new teachers to help identify areas of focus for professional goal setting. See pages 262-265 for tools to use in goal setting.

Mentors should review their own district teacher performance evaluation criteria to identify alignment with the six areas used in this book and assist new teachers in making explicit connections between the two.



Guiding Questions for Unit Design in the Standards-Based Classroom

1st STEP: What should students know and be able to do?

1. On which content standard(s) will the students be working?
2. What are the key ideas, major themes, big concepts, or essential understandings embedded those standards? How are the selected standards related to the essential understandings of the course?
3. If you are using a commercial program or a unit designed by others, what parts of it are aligned or not aligned with the information you presented in #1 and #2? What components need to be added or eliminated?
4. When and where (inside and outside of school) have the students encountered information about and had experience with these key concepts/big ideas before?

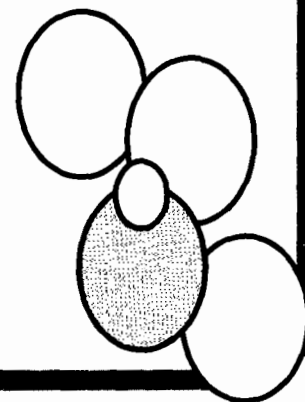
2nd STEP: How will I, and they, know when they are successful?

5. What would it look like when students can demonstrate that they understand the big ideas and have the essential skills? Brainstorm some ways students might demonstrate their capacity to use the newly learned concepts/information appropriately in a new situation?
6. Using the ideas generated in #5, what task/products would best demonstrate student understanding? What form should the criteria take? Should you use a rubric, a performance task list, or a checklist? What variables should be listed as criteria?
7. What does a task analysis (the assessment criteria provides the components of the task analysis,) reveal about the skills, the knowledge, and the level of understanding required by the task?
8. Do you already have sufficient preassessment data or do you need to gather more? If so, what method is best to use? What does the preassessment data tell you about the skills and knowledge on which the entire group will need to focus? Are there individual students who will need additional support if they are to have a realistic opportunity to demonstrate mastery? In which areas will they need support?

Guiding Questions for Unit Design in the Standards-Based Classroom continued...

3rd STEP: What learning experiences will facilitate their success?

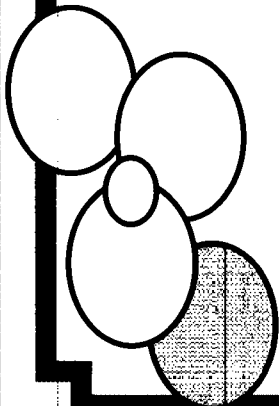
9. How will you "Frame the Learning" so that students know what they are going to be doing, what they will know and be able to do as a result of those activities, how they will be assessed, and how everything they are doing is aligned with the standards?
10. How will you help students access prior knowledge and use it productively, either building on it or reframing their thinking as appropriate?
11. What methods of presentation and what active learning experiences can you use to help students achieve the standard? Could you provide multiple sources of information and exercises that would help all students to make real world connections and use sophisticated thinking skills?
12. What assignments, projects, and homework will help students see the relevance of the learning? How might you provide multiple pathways to learning?
13. What classroom activities/observations, as well as formative quizzes and tests, would provide you and your students information on their progress toward the standard?
14. What materials and resources do you need to locate and organize to provide multiple pathways to learning? How should you organize the classroom and the materials to provide easy student access?
15. What else might you do to provide challenging and meaningful experiences for both struggling and advanced learners? Are there other human, print, or electronic resources you might consult to refine/review your plan?



Guiding Questions for Unit Design in the Standards-Based Classroom continued...

4th STEP: Based on data, how do I refine the learning experiences and/or the assessment?

16. How did students do on the performance task? Were there some students who were not successful? What might account for that? What could you do differently next time?
17. What else do you need to consider in your advance planning the next time you are focusing on this standard?
18. Did all of the activities guide students toward mastery of the standard? Are there activities that need to be added, modified, or eliminated?
19. Over all, was this unit effective for addressing the standard(s)? Are there other standards that you could incorporate into this unit or are there other units of study where you can have the students revisit these standards or essential understandings?



adapted from the Facilitator's Guide and Workbook for *Common Ground in the Standards-Based Education Classroom* prepared by the Northern Colorado BOCES SBE Design Team

Essential Understandings

Use this list of concepts to help new teachers write generalizations or essential understandings. The combination of two or more of these concepts plus the addition of content-specific concepts promotes concept-based teaching and learning rather getting bogged down in facts taught in isolation. By using this approach, you can help new teachers move beyond working through the book page by page. This exercise can also help new teachers design rigorous and authentic assessment tasks.

Stimulus	Individual	Revolution	Organization
Belief	Balance	Renaissance	Attitude
Probability	Communication	Object	Estimation
Values	Number	Community	Message
Change	Interaction	Curiosity	Honor
People	Variables	Challenge	Love
Celebration	Projection	Fairness	Loyalty
Production	Influence	Justice	Reaction
Time	Relationship	Equilibrium	Survival
Space	Knowledge	Economics	Wellness
Order	Limit	Geography	Stamina
Force	Motion	Solution	Fitness
Complexity	Consequence	Tradition	Group
Culture	Music	Reciprocity	Matter
Interdependence	Tension	Stability	Sequence
Perspective	Opinion	Cohesion	History
Scale	Habitat	Disparity	Rotation
Property	Needs	Factor	Success
Behavior	Diversity	Density	Intelligence
System	Wants	Faith	Style
Adaptation	Rhythm	Fantasy	Failure
Structure	Pace	Division	Speed
Role	Conflict	Unity	Truth
Freedom	Pattern	Family	Capacity
Competition	Control	Patriotism	Power
Symbol	Beauty	Parallel	Supply

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MARK T. BROPHY
STAFFING/MENTOR COORDINATOR
HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE



DR. JOHN E. DURKIN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
20 IRVING STREET
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609-2493
(508) 799-3027
FAX (508) 799-3666

TO: Massachusetts Department of Education
FROM: Mark T. Brophy
SUBJECT: Documentation of Mentoring requirements for Professional Licensure
Date: June _____

The purpose of this letter is to provide the necessary evidence that is required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to substantiate that a year long mentor/mentee relationship occurred and that all other mentoring requirements for professional licensure has been met beyond the induction year.

_____ of the Worcester Public Schools was assigned to mentor
(mentor)

_____ by _____. The
(mentee) (Principal/Supervisor)

mentoring took place at _____ during the
(school)

_____ school year.

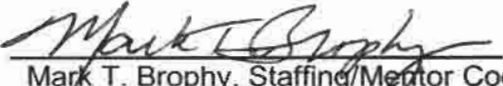
Worcester Public School's mentoring program is supervised by Mark T. Brophy.

Acknowledgement of signatures of all parties involved indicates that all parties have fulfilled the requirements of the program.

Teacher/School

Principal/School

Mentor Teacher


Mark T. Brophy, Staffing/Mentor Coordinator
Worcester Public Schools

cc: Personnel File