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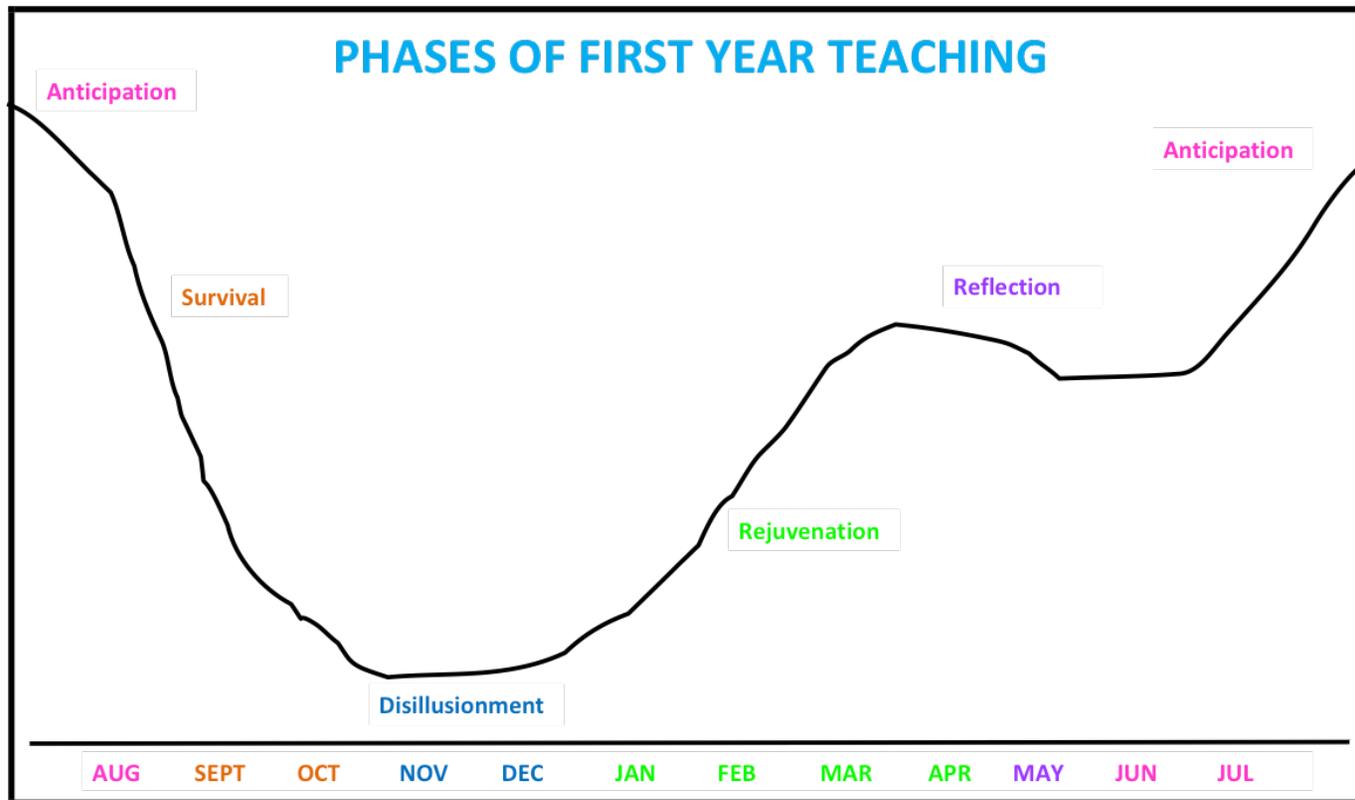
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FALL RESOURCES

PHASES OF FIRST YEAR TEACHING



Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). The stages of a teacher's first year.

Adapted from Moir, E. (1999). *The Stages of a Teacher's First Year*

NEW TEACHER LEARNING CIRCLES

As new teachers, it is important to come together to reflect and share our experiences at the end of each *First-Year Teacher Phase*. During our time together, we will participate in a learning circle as a method for encouraging collaborative action. Below are the procedures and information for running a smooth, meaningful reflection session.

Self-Managed Groups

Each group will manage its own discussion, data, and time. Here are useful roles for self-managing this work. Divide up the work as you wish:

Discussion Facilitator: Assures that each person in the circle is given a chance to speak within the available time. Keeps group on track. Redirects as necessary.

Time Keeper: Keeps group aware of remaining time. Monitors speakers and signals time remaining.

Recorder: Writes group's output on charts using speakers' words (ask people to restate long ideas succinctly).

Data Manager: Collects all charts with information, shares with large group, and turns in information at the end of the activity.

Ground Rules

All ideas are valid; honor the speakers' words
Every voice is heard
Share the time
Listen without interrupting
Summarized information is written on chart paper
Summarized information is presented to large group

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONING

Use the following menu of questions to assist with reframing and understanding circumstances, events or behavior from a different point of view.



- What do I want to learn or understand? Why is this significant?
- How might I think about this situation differently?
- What am I not considering?
- What judgments and assumptions are blocking alternative ways of seeing this situation?
- Why do I hold so strongly to this one view? What function does this serve? Is there something that I am protecting or defending?
- Has this always been the case, or have there been times when something different has happened? Why?
- What influences on my thinking and behaving have I not considered?
- How do others interpret this situation?
- What are my values, assumptions and beliefs that impact this situation?
- What actions did I take? Why? What was my reaction? Feelings? Intention?
- Should I maintain my current understanding of the situation? Modify or refine my understanding? Develop a new understanding?
- Have I introduced strategies to support my refined or new conceptualization?
- What are possible alternatives that may further progress toward my goals?



MINDFUL MEMORANDUM

To: _____

From: _____ Date: _____



Important Topic of the Moment:

Questions/Concerns/Successes:

Priority Gauge:

Need to Talk Now! When you can, but soon Whenever

Mentor's Response

To: _____

From: _____ Date: _____

Response/Comments:

MINDFUL MEMORANDUM

To: _____

From: _____ Date: _____



Important Topic of the Moment:

Questions/Concerns/Successes:

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Important Topic of the Moment:

Questions/Concerns/Successes:

Priority Gauge:

Need to Talk Now! When you can, but soon Whenever

Mentor's Response

To: _____

From: _____ Date: _____

Response/Comments:

CAMPUS CONTACTS



My Campus Lead Mentor is:

_____ Phone: _____

My Mentor is:

_____ Phone: _____

My Department Leader/Team Leader is:

_____ Phone: _____



My Content Coordinator is:

_____ Phone: _____

My Campus BBR Representative is:

_____ Phone: _____

My Campus Administrative Staff:

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Others:

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| DISTRICT CONTACTS | STAFF DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Glenda Horner 281.517.6008 | PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT Laura Harman 281.897.4099 |
| | PAYROLL/INSURANCE Information 281.897.3882 | BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS Gloria Cooper 281.897.4147 |
| | TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT CUSTOMER CARE CENTER 281.897.4357 | |

ANTICIPATION PHASE

August-September

What it looks like.

The Anticipation phase is based on a new teacher's affirmative and empowering student teaching experience.

This is the "honeymoon phase" for new teachers.

The new teacher...

Wants to make a good first impression

Wants to connect with all students

Is excited, yet overwhelmed

Has a lot of questions, but is not sure where to direct them

Is trying to "keep up"

Is still learning basics about the school

Is narrowly focused; thinking within the four walls of their classroom`

Questions to Anticipate.

"How do I arrange my classroom for the first week?"

"How do I decide what to teach the first days and weeks of school?"

"When and how should I test students?"

"How do I learn my students' names?"

"How do I get my students to like me?"

"What books and supplies will I need? Do I have to buy them with my own money?"

"What should I expect out of students the first week?"

"To whom do I go to for help with discipline problems?"

"Where are the faculty rest rooms?"

"How do I control my class?"

How to Support.

Be empathetic

Encourage ALL questions

Check in with new teacher periodically

Get to know your mentee outside of class: eat lunch together, go for coffee after school

Introduce your mentee to faculty members

Make a schedule to observe one another

Make a schedule to meet throughout the semester, though encourage flexibility

Don't say it all at once!

Resource: *Tips for Staying Organized*

Resource: *First Day of School*

Resource: *Classroom Management Reflection*

Ways to Celebrate.

No success is too small to celebrate! New teachers have a lot to be proud of at the end of this phase.

Let your mentee know how well he/she did with getting through the first month of school; running a student-centered classroom, learning students' names, getting through the first unit of instruction.

Treat your mentee to a cup of coffee or beverage after school and celebrate what he/she did exceptionally well at the beginning of the year. Be specific.

Keep the communication going: Place a 'Mindful Memorandum' in the mentee's box as they will soon be moving into the survival phase and will have new needs.

GOAL SETTING

August-September



SMART Goal: I will focus on analyzing the effect(s) two research based teaching strategies have on student growth within my classroom by conducting data analysis and comparison of student performance with colleagues at least once a week to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement by 15% by the end of the next grading period.

Specific Routines and Procedures:

- The new teacher will identify two specific teaching strategies they will utilize to determine effectiveness of the strategy by measuring student performance.
- Collaboration with colleagues and Mentor will aid the teacher in this process.
- Data driven decision making.

Measurable (data sources):

- Analysis and comparison of student achievement.
- Progress monitoring of specific area of focus as it relates to the teaching strategy.
- Discussion with colleagues at least once a week
- Improved student achievement by 15% by the end of the grading period.

Attainable:

- By working collaboratively with experienced teachers, I can build my own capacity with support from others.
- With proper planning and data driven decisions, my students can gain 15% improvement in student achievement.

Results-oriented:

- Improve student achievement by 15%.
- Perform data analysis with colleagues at least once a week.
- Teacher growth in data analysis, data driven decision making and use of research based teaching strategies.

Time-bound:

- Improve student achievement by 15% by the end of the grading period.
- Collaborate and analyze data at least once a week with colleagues.

Your LINK to Success

TIPS FOR STAYING ORGANIZED

Create your Personal Organization Method.

Here is an excerpt from David Allen about this process from his book, *Getting Things Done*:

Creating a method for organizing your thoughts and actions depends on five key stages. Remember that trusting your method is essential. You'll need to use or create a system that allows you to move between these stages quickly and easily: collecting information; processing that information; organizing the processed results; reviewing those results; taking action.

It may take some time to train yourself to take these five steps, but once you do, it will become second nature to you. Think about how you might begin to develop this in your work, and try using the steps for your next classroom project.

Write it Down!

Have you ever felt that things were getting out of control in your planning process? Did you take a minute to sit and write it down? And after you did...did you feel better?

Your brain is not for holding commitments...it doesn't function very well that way.

Make sense, right? Isn't this the whole idea behind why we "write up" lesson plans?

Doesn't it feel great to be able to write up a lesson plan in an organized manner and share it with your students? Why not ensure that you do this in all your daily work to increase your organization? Student issues in the classroom? Write them down. Parent coming with a complaint? Write it down. Principle coming in to do an observation? Write down the important aspects of your lesson in detail.

Plan with a Colleague or Mentor.

As a new teacher, it's such a challenge to stay on top of all the important work that is presented to you. One way to support your resolve to stay organized is to take advantage of planning with a colleague. Find a teacher-buddy who can do the work with you. The time spent planning will be much more productive. The strongest teams are those who plan together. Shared thoughts, ideas and resources never fail to produce happier teachers and excellent results with students.

References:

Allen, David. *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*. Penguin Books. 2002.
Dabbs, Lisa Michelle "Let's Not Fall Behind: Three Tips to Help You Stay Organized." Edutopia. The George Lucas Educational Foundation. www.edutopia.org.2013
Thompson, Julia G. *The First-Year Teacher's Checklist*. Jossey-Bass Publisher. 2009

Linked in: Managing your Time

- o Create routines to make your workdays predictable and manageable.
- o Do a task right the first time so that you don't have to redo it.
- o Write down things you will need to remember.
- o Plan how you will use your planning time at school.
- o Break a large task into smaller, manageable ones.
- o Learn to schedule your most challenging work at the times of day when your energy is high.
- o If you don't understand something, ask. If you need help, ask.
- o Use small blocks of time. You can accomplish a lot in just a few minutes.
- o Keep your work area uncluttered and organized.
- o No matter how busy you are, take a moment to enjoy your students.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Your classroom should be welcoming and student-centered. Each student should feel that he or she contributes to the success of everyone in the classroom. This type of environment will reward your efforts in several ways:

- A focus on instruction that increases student achievement
- A bond among students and between teachers and students
- Reduced misbehavior
- A sense of pride and school spirit

Create a Student-Centered Environment

There are many ways to create a student-centered environment:

- Have a recognition area that showcases students' achievements
- Hang encouraging posters
- Set a shared class goal, and graph the progress your students make toward achieving that goal
- Create a bank of shared supplies for students who may need to borrow a pen or pencil
- Post a question, puzzle, or brainteaser of the day for students to enjoy
- Encourage student ownership of some interactive parts of the room such as word walls, calendars, or message boards.

Checklist for First Day of School

There is so much to do before your first day in the classroom. This checklist offers suggestions as you get ready for your students.

- Plan your bulletin boards.
- Where do you want to post announcements?
- Make a welcome back display.
- Set up two or three learning centers.
- Create signs for your room to help with procedures.
- Prepare your class roles and records.
- Have your students' schedules available.
- Gather, organize, and label your supplies.
- Prepare take-home packets with syllabus, expectations and grading plans.
- Check special education paperwork on your students.
- Set up a folder for substitutes.
- Prepare files for correspondence from parents.
- Prepare a file for campus faculty information.
- Write tentative lesson plans for the coming week.
- Write your name and important class information on the board.
- Make a checklist for returned forms.

References:

Shalaway, L. Learning to Teach...Not Just for Beginners: The Essential Guide for All Teachers. Scholastic, Inc. 2005
Thompson, Julia G. The First-Year Teacher's Checklist. Jossey-Bass Publisher. 2009.

Linked in: What Students Expect of You

- o Enjoy being with them
- o Appreciate them for who they are
- o Set a positive, supportive tone for the class
- o Show that you enjoy the classes you teach
- o Be fair in the way you treat all students
- o Be consistent with enforcing rules
- o Ask about their lives outside of school
- o Be prepared for class
- o Have a sense of humor
- o Listen to them when a problem arises
- o Show that you have self-control
- o Remember what it was like to be their age

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The mentoring teacher can be a tremendous help to first-year teachers in maintaining order in the classroom. To effectively train novices, mentors must first assess their own classroom management techniques and processes. A simple reflection on each of the following questions will provide mentors with a conscious guide in outlining what you believe and what you expect in your classroom. This guide might be useful in communicating needed information to first-year teachers about classroom management practices. Think about these questions. Jot down your responses to reflect on what you do.

| Topic | Questions | Belief or Practice | Reason |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|--------|
| Rules and Procedures | What are your classroom rules? Should students give input for the rules and consequences? | | |
| Consequences | Do all students receive the same consequence for the same behavior? If not, what types of students are the exception? What types of behavior can be ignored? How do you handle off-task behaviors | | |
| Rewards | Do you believe in rewarding students for good behavior? If so, what types of rewards do you use? | | |
| Assistance | When is it appropriate and effective to inform parents of their child's misbehavior? What types of offenses should be handled by the administrative team? | | |

References:

Podsen, I and Denmark, V. *Coaching and Mentoring: First Year and Student Teachers*. Eye on Education. 2000.
Thompson, Julia G. *The First-Year Teacher's Checklist*. Jossey-Bass Publisher. 2009.

Linked in: Make Things Run Smoothly with Classroom Procedures

Your students will need to know how to:

- o Complete start-of-class routines
- o Manage personal belongings
- o Manage electronic devices
- o Handle tardiness
- o Obtain materials and supplies
- o Use shared class supplies
- o Signal for the teacher's attention
- o Respond when the teacher signals for attention
- o Control noise levels
- o Organize their notebooks
- o Distribute handouts
- o Turn in papers
- o Complete makeup work
- o Turn in late work
- o Discuss an individual concern
- o Move into groups
- o Behave during small group/ large group discussions
- o Behave during a fire or disaster drill
- o Ask to leave the room before the end of class
- o Complete end-of-class routines

LEARNING CIRCLE REFLECTION

Anticipation Phase I



1. Check-in. Share your philosophy on teaching and an overarching goal you have for yourself during this first year. Time limit: _____ minutes.

2. You have achieved your goal of becoming a teacher and your excitement and energy for your new position is apparent. What do you look forward to the most in your new position? What do you feel the most anxious about in your new role? Using a round-robin strategy, share your answers to the questions above. What resources have you collected or been introduced to that you feel will be the most beneficial during your journey and why? Time limit: _____ minutes.

3. After sharing the expectations and available resources for the upcoming year, generate a list of questions or concerns you may have as you step into your new role. What ways can we best address these concerns or questions? Time limit: _____ minutes.

4. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? How do you plan to utilize these strengths within your classroom while building quality relationships with students, parents and staff? Time limit: _____ minutes.

5. Check-out. Share one way that your administration, colleagues and mentor(s) can best support your first year of teaching. Time limit: _____ minutes.



SURVIVAL PHASE

September - October

What it looks like.

Despite teacher education courses and student teaching experiences, the realities of teaching on their own catch new teachers off guard.

The new teacher...

Is consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching

Is learning at a very rapid pace

Finds little time to stop and reflect on his/her experiences

Feels particularly overwhelmed with the constant need to develop curriculum

Is surprised by the amount of work

Is tired and often “running on empty”

Can spend up to 70 hours a week on school work

Manages to have hope that the turmoil will soon subside

Questions to Anticipate.

“How can I get all of today’s work done before it starts all over again tomorrow?”

“When will things slow down?”

“How do I know if my students *get it*?”

“How do I deal with difficult parents?”

“When do I need to move on to the next unit?”

How to Support.

During this phase, the mentor should be providing resources and collaboration with the new teacher. The mentor may be more of a problem-solver for the new teacher during this phase.

Listen more, talk less

Model techniques for parent conferences; let your mentee observe you making a parent phone call

Collaborate with new teacher on strategies, lesson plans, setting up learning centers, classroom management techniques

Collaborate with new teacher for finding solutions to problems

Bring your mentee a cup of coffee

Share your *survival phase* with your mentee

Resource: *The Collaborative Conference*

Resource: *Partnering with Parents*

Ways to Celebrate.

Attend a school event together; a football game, a play, a choir concert, etc.

Gather positive comments from your mentees’ current students. Share the comments with your mentees to let them know what a difference they are making.

Keep the communication going: Place a ‘Mindful Memorandum’ in their box as they will soon be moving into the *disillusionment phase* and will have new needs.

THE COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCE

We want new teachers to learn to self-assess, to know when to ask for help, and then to be able to self-adjust in order to promote student learning. To do this, mentors need to orchestrate conferences and other data-driven discussions. We never know when a mentoring “teachable moment” will occur. Both carefully planned conferences and informal hallway conversations can have powerful influence on teacher decision-making and classroom practice.

Outcomes for Teacher:

Mutually agree on next steps in learning or refining a new technique, identify problems, develop solutions to problems.

Mentor Behaviors:

Focus on the teacher’s agenda
Guide the problem solving process
Explore pros and cons of solutions
Keep discussion focused on problem solving

When the Collaborative Approach is Used:

The mentor and the teacher are equally engaged in determining the next steps
The teacher has a positive attitude about his own capacity and the capacity of his students
The teacher seeks to have more knowledge and develop more skills

Skills for Collaborative Problem Solving:

Active Listening
“I-messages” or assertive messages
Brainstorming
Consensus Building

The Six-Step Problem Solving Method:

Step One: Identify the Problem
Step Two: Generate Possible Solutions
Step Three: Evaluate the Solutions

Step Four: Select a Solution to Try
Step Five: Make a Plan and Implement It
Step Six: Evaluate the Solution

References:
Rutherford, P. *The 21st Century Mentor’s Handbook: Creating a Culture for Learning*.
Just ASK Publications. 2005.

Linked in:

Questions that Promote Teacher Thinking

Great open-ended questions for mentors to indicate a discussion and keep the discussion on track.

- o What do you need to do next?
- o Based on what you know, what can you predict about...?
- o Does what...said make you think differently about...?
- o How does...tie in with what we have discussed before?
- o Suppose...what then?
- o Tell me what you mean when you...
- o When have you done something like this before? How did it work out for you?
- o What sort of impact do you think...?
- o Can you think of another way you can do this?
- o What else do you see?
- o How would you feel if...?
- o What have you heard about...?
- o Why is this one better than that one?
- o What do you think causes...?
- o How is... different (like)...?
- o How does this compare with...?
- o Can you tell me more about...?
- o How about... What if...?

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

What Parents Expect of Their Child's Teacher

While not all parents or guardians will have the same expectations of their child's teacher, you can anticipate and plan for some similarities. Your students' parents will expect you to:

- *Ensure their child's safety while the child is in your class
- *Be fair in your treatment of their child
- *Recognize their child's unique gifts and talents
- *Be reasonable in the amount of homework you assign
- *Follow school rules and procedures
- *Focus on positive qualities more than negative
- *Contact them quickly, if a problem arises

- *Maintain an orderly classroom
- *Be alert to the misbehavior of other students and how it may affect their child
- *Look and act like a confident, skilled, professional educator
- *Keep them apprised of scheduled events
- *Work with them for the benefit of their child
- *Be able to meet with them before or after school
- *Return phone calls promptly

- *Protect their family's privacy
- *Stay within the boundaries of your role as a teacher
- *Be honest with them
- *Respect the confidentiality of their child's school records and progress reports
- *Be willing to listen to them
- *Talk to them before going to an administrator for help
- *Be aware of any health issues their child may have
- *Be courteous when speaking to their child

What Parents Want to Know

The Parent-Teacher Conference

- | | |
|--|--|
| What are the learning goals in the classroom? | How are you helping my child improve, and what can I do to support learning at home? |
| How are you engaging my child during the learning process? | How can I help my child solve academic or behavioral problems? |
| How do you assess student learning? | How is my child progressing? |

References:

Shalaway, L. Learning to Teach...Not Just for Beginners: The Essential Guide for All Teachers. Scholastic, Inc. 2005
Thompson, Julia G. The First-Year Teacher's Checklist. Jossey-Bass Publisher. 2009.

Linked in: Successful Parent Communication

- o Begin and end all calls and conferences with a positive statement about the student
- o Listen carefully. Take notes to ensure you understand their concerns.
- o Maintain a professional demeanor
- o Avoid educational jargon
- o Be sure parents know you care
- o If a conference does not go smoothly, schedule another meeting with the parent (s)
- o When a parent leaves a message, return the call as soon as you can
- o Work together with parents to develop a solution you all agree on
- o Proofread all written correspondence
- o Document the meeting or conversation

LEARNING CIRCLE REFLECTION

Survival Phase



1. Check-in. During the first few months of school, many first year teachers find themselves overwhelmed and experiencing information overload. Creating lesson plans, taking attendance, attending meetings, calling parents, completing required documentation, grading assessments and inputting grades are just a few of the expected tasks. In what way do you prioritize these tasks? What stress relievers are you utilizing to aid you in this process? Time limit: _____ minutes.
2. Individually, consider the various tasks you must complete on a daily basis. Which of these tasks do you consider to be the most important? Why? Which of these tasks do you struggle with the most? Why? Utilizing a round-robin strategy, share your responses and the impact it is having on the learning process. Time limit: _____ minutes.
3. The goal of administrators, colleagues and mentors is to relieve the stress of new teachers and make the experience meaningful and reflective. A skill necessary to addressing the day-to-day grind of teachers is that of prioritization. Consider for a moment your strengths and comfort levels with your various tasks. In what priority would you classify these tasks as being the most meaningful to the learning process? Of those considered high priority, how could they be managed more effectively based on your strengths and comfort levels? Time limit: _____ minutes.
4. Several of the tasks mentioned today have a lesser degree of priority on student learning. This is not to say they aren't necessary or important. With that being said, what additional support or resources would you consider to be the most beneficial in growing your ability and skill acquisition in regards to these tasks? Time limit: _____ minutes.
5. Check-out. Share one way that you and your mentor can monitor your progress on prioritizing tasks and utilizing resources to improve task implementation over the next week. Time limit: _____ minutes.



DISILLUSIONMENT PHASE

November-December

What it looks like.

The extensive time commitment, the realization that things are probably not going as smoothly as they want, and low morale contribute to this period of disenchantment.

The new teacher...

Is vulnerable

Expresses self-doubt, has low self-esteem

Begins to question his/her commitment and competence

May fall ill during this time

Is anxious about new events that come up

Is stressed about dealing with classroom-management issues

May receive complaints from friends and family members, due to so much of his/her time consumed by work

Is ready for a break!

Questions to Anticipate.

“How do I find the time to nurture the relationships in my life, outside of work?”

“How do I request a substitute?”

“Is teaching the right profession for me?”

“Am I a terrible teacher?”

“How do I get these kids to want to learn?”

“How do I grade everything?”

“How do I effectively help students who are habitually absent?”

“How do I motivate the students who tell me they don’t want to learn?”

How to Support.

This is the phase where a new teacher needs their mentor to be a trusted listener and advocate for them.

Help your mentee prepare for their formal evaluation

Observe your mentee prior to their formal evaluation

Encourage your mentee

Resource: *Attitudes and Behaviors of Effective Teaching*

Resource: *Observation Conferences*

Resource: *Help for Mentors: What to do when your mentee...*

Resource: *Holiday Survival Kit*

Ways to Celebrate.

Holiday Survival Kit: This simple gift basket will help your mentee make it through the end of the school year

Organize a Secret Santa with the mentors/mentees at your campus

Host a luncheon or after school meet-up, to celebrate the positives of the first semester

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

By this time in the school year, your mentee needs you to be a strong advocate for his/her success. He/she wants to do well, but may need extra encouragement to weather the storms of the disillusionment phase. While instructional planning, assessments and formal evaluations are running through the new teacher's mind, he/she may simply need to be reminded of the basics. Below is advice to share with your mentee regarding the attitudes and behaviors of effective teachers.

Maintain a Positive Reputation: Teach from your heart, treat your students with dignity, carry yourself as a professional at all times, be the most enthusiastic person you know, and wear your positive reputation proudly.

Choose Your Reactions: We have very little control over our circumstances, but we have very much control over how we choose to react to those circumstances. Your circumstances will never determine who you are as a teacher, but rather your reactions to those circumstances will reveal, to students, parents, coworkers and to yourself, the kind of teacher you are and the kind of person you are.

Don't Let Negative Coworkers Affect You: The difference between truly effective and truly ineffective teachers lies in the choices they have made along the way. Don't fall prey to the negativity of those who may try to drag you down.

Learn to Work Cooperatively with Parents: Parents are much more likely to support you when they believe you are genuinely interested in their child. Approach all parents with the assumption that they truly do want what's best for their children, and work cooperatively and professionally with them in helping to achieve a common goal.

Remind Yourself Why You Chose to Become a Teacher: Teaching is stressful and at times overwhelming. When you feel discouraged, remind yourself why you became a teacher. It won't lessen the workload, but it will make it seem much more bearable.

Ask for Assistance: Ask others to provide assistance to you. These "others" could include administrators, mentor teachers, fellow teachers, students, parents and community members.

Set Goals for Your Own Improvement: Goals are accomplished one step at a time. Whatever your goals are, write them down and post them. Take one step toward your goals every day.

Be Flexible: The only predictability in teaching is that it is unpredictable! Don't let yourself get bent out of shape by things over which you have no control. Be flexible.

Learn and Grow from Your Mistakes: Every mistake you make is an invitation to learn and an opportunity to grow. You will make some in your teaching. Just make sure you put them to good use.

Linked in:
From Veteran Teachers:
What I Wish I Had
Known That First Year

- o Who was REALLY in charge... the chain of command
- o I was not going to accomplish everything
- o It's alright to say, "Help!"
- o That I did not have to be perfect
- o Just ask!
- o It's okay to make mistakes
- o Other teachers, new and veteran, are feeling similar frustrations
- o How to organize paperwork
- o Do not take it personally
- o Pick your battles
- o Save things to use next year
- o Organize and sort information as you receive it
- o How to be flexible
- o Achieve personal/professional balance
- o Be their teacher; not their friend or parent
- o Maintain confidentiality
- o Calendar of events, prior to start of school
- o Let students know you care by finding out what they care about
- o Be patient and know it will get better

OBSERVATION CONFERENCES

Pre Observation Conference

The pre observation conference is an important first step and an effective way to build trust and increase collaboration between mentors and mentees. This conference provides you with the opportunity to ask specific questions about the lesson, the teaching strategies selected, the assessment methods, the materials chosen or developed, the classroom management techniques, and the relationship of this lesson to previous and subsequent lessons.

Goals of Pre observation Conference:

- Negotiate instructional content, lesson objectives, teaching strategies
- Target instructional behaviors to be observed
- Ask mentee for feedback focus
- Establish trust and collaboration

Pre observation Guide:

- Set the Tone-** “The purpose of our conference today is to discuss your upcoming lesson”
- Set the Agenda-** Today we will talk about these aspects of a lesson:
 - How you planned the lesson
 - Instructional procedures you plan to use
 - What classroom management techniques you will target
 - How the data will be collected, the time for the post-conference.
- Adjust the Agenda -** “Is there anything else you would like to discuss?”
- Conference Content -** Use the agenda to guide the content. Take notes on each aspect, so you can paraphrase and note suggestions made.
- Conference Closing -** Explain how you will collect you data, review performance criteria, and set the time and date for the post conference review.

References:

Podsen, I and Denmark, V. Coaching and Mentoring: First year and Student Teachers. Eye on education. 2000
Thompson, Julia G. The First-Year Teacher’s Checklist. Jossey-Bass Publisher. 2009.

Linked in: Suggestions for Working Well with Supervisors

- o Always follow the chain of command
- o Behave in a professional manner at all times
- o Follow school rules, policies, and procedures
- o Learn to take criticism gracefully
- o Be a little early to school, and stay a little late
- o Handle all but the most severe discipline problems yourself
- o Check your paperwork. Make sure it is neat, accurate, and on time
- o Involve your supervisors in the successes of your classroom
- o Don’t make excuses
- o When you make a mistake, admit it. Never lie to a supervisor
- o Be an active teacher who creates a classroom of active learners.
- o Keep your supervisors informed of positive and negative events in your classroom. Never allow a supervisor to be surprised by bad news.

OBSERVATION CONFERENCES

Post Observation Conference

Once you have observed your mentee, you will need to analyze the data and prepare for the post observation conference.

Prior to Post observation Conference:

- Review the data collected
- Relate to effective teaching research
- Identify teaching strengths and professional growth targets
- Develop the approach for the post conference session
- Outline the conference format

Goals of Post observation Conference:

- Establish the conference climate
- Present data
- Share interpretations
- Encourage critical thinking
- Give positive and negative feedback
- Collaborate on alternative positive feedback
- Develop a plan to move forward

Pre observation Guide:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Set the Tone- | “The purpose of our conference today is to discuss your upcoming lesson” |
| Set the Agenda- | Today we will talk about these aspects of a lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Strengths of the lesson as they apply to planning, presentation, classroom managementProblem spots encountered as they apply to planning, presentation, classroom managementRecommendations |
| Adjust the Agenda - | “Is there anything else you would like to discuss?” |
| Conference Content - | Use the agenda to guide the content. Take notes on each aspect, so you can paraphrase and note suggestions made. |
| Conference Closing - | Mutual agreement on the follow-up action plan. |

References:
Podsen, I and Denmark, V. Coaching and Mentoring: First year and Student Teachers. Eye on education. 2000.

Linked in: Using a Collaborative Approach in Conferences

Clarifying: Seeking information as viewed by the new teacher. “Please tell me what you feel are the strengths of your lesson as it relates to planning,” or “Explain to me what problems you experienced with planning this lesson.”

Listening: Understanding the information presented by using effective listening skills - eye contact, paraphrasing, probing, and letting the mentee do most of the talking. “Tell me more about how you identified the learning objectives,” or “Yes, I follow your thinking process.”

Reflecting: Checking for understanding about the information presented. “As a summary of your strengths in the areas of planning, I hear you saying...” or “Let me see if I understand the problem as you stated it...Is this your perceptions of the problem?”

Presenting: Offering your Viewpoint after the new teacher has presented his or her position. “Yes, I agree your planning skills are a strength area,” or “The problem as I see it relates more to classroom management.”

Clarifying: Making sure the new teacher understands your position on the topic. “What do you think I am saying about...?”

Problem Solving: Mutually identifying solutions and options. “Let’s brainstorm individually about ways to strengthen the beginning of your lesson. Then we’ll share our ideas.”

Encouraging divergent views: Staying open to ideas and accepting a difference of opinions. “It appears we have very different views about how to handle this situation. How can we come to a mutually agreeable solution? Where do we agree and where do we differ?”

HELP FOR MENTORS

What do you do when your mentee...

Does not want to meet or routinely cancels appointments?

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

Does not seem to feel a need for your assistance?

- o Continue to make new teacher aware of time line issues (grades, policies, procedures, etc.)
- o Schedule weekly or bi-weekly meeting times
- o Don't use e-mail to correspond; talk face-to-face
- o Observe the new teacher informally
- o Explain that being part of a mentoring program is part of being a professional
- o Share/Swap lesson plans and resources
- o Build trust by honoring confidentiality
- o Suggest joint work sessions on tasks
- o Use open-ended questions: pose scenarios (e.g., "How would you handle...?")
- o Be direct; ask them if they would feel more comfortable having another mentor

Is very stressed?

- o Go on an outing away from school
- o Introduce him/her to others who can help
- o Offer problem-solving suggestions
- o Adjust expectations
- o Share a joke or a hug

Is having issues with organizational and management issues?

- o Offer room organization suggestions, emphasizing student-friendly arrangements.
- o Label basic expectations
- o Have new teacher visit other classrooms
- o Teach the use of binders, folders, and other organizational tools

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

- o Model work with such students
- o Arrange observations of other classes
- o Remind new teacher of the 'chain of command'
- o Review differentiation strategies
- o Suggest ways to involve the parents
- o Suggest ways to communicate one-on-one with student
- o Be sure expectations and consequences are clear and consistent

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

- o Set an agenda for meetings with the new teacher
- o Have meetings in casual setting
- o Offer to observe the teacher's instruction
- o Ask the new teacher to share something that is working and something that is not working
- o Don't ask, "Is everything okay?". Ask more open-ended questions that invite professional conversations/reflection
- o Share ideas and/or resource materials

Is having problems communicating with parents?

- o Model how to communicate with parents
- o Establish a format to follow when communicating with parents
- o Alert the new teachers to situations to look out for
- o Encourage the new teacher to document parent communications carefully

Needs help saying "no" to requests to take on more responsibilities?

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

Is thinking about leaving the teaching profession?

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

HOLIDAY SURVIVAL KIT

Include the following in a creative bag/kit for your mentee to enjoy as he/she nears the end of the disillusionment phase. Don't forget to let your mentee know what a great job he/she is doing.

Goodie Bag Contents

| | |
|---------------|---|
| An Umbrella | to weather the storm |
| Lifesavers | the "friend you call on to rescue you" |
| Candy Bar | to sweeten those hours of grading finals |
| Hot Chocolate | Relax and enjoy the Holidays |
| Rubber Band | to hold it together until the end of the semester |
| Whistle | create some excitement |
| Candle | for the New Year: After you have been refreshed, return to light the flame of knowledge |

Linked in: Emotional Support Ideas to Encourage your Mentee

- o Any sweet treat: "Wishing you a week filled with sweetness"
- o Popcorn: "We just popped in to wish you a great day"
- o Mug with hot chocolate mix: "Wishing you a cup of cheer."
- o Bubble gum: "May your week bubble over with fun!"
- o 7UP: "7 uplifting ideas for a wonderful year" (include 7 uplifting thoughts/ideas)
- o Mints: "I *mint* to wish you a good day."
- o Jar of Jam: "Hoping your day is jam-packed with fun"
- o Pasta: "Have a *pasta-tively* good day"
- o Seasoning Mix: "Seasoned with love"
- o Soup Mix: "You're *souper*"

LEARNING CIRCLE REFLECTION

Disillusionment Phase



1. Check-in. The goal of every teacher is to foster an environment conducive to learning for all stakeholders. For this reason sound classroom management is a must. However, many experienced teachers struggle on a daily basis with planning and implementing effective classroom policies and procedures so it is understandable that novice teachers do the same. What classroom management practices have you implemented that have been successful for you during your first few months? Time limit: _____ minutes.
2. Harry Wong states that, “The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline but the lack of procedures and routines.” What procedures and routines do you practice on a consistent basis in your classroom? Do you perceive them as being effective? Why? Why not? Time limit: _____ minutes.
3. For many teachers, this is the time of year when the feelings of incompetence arise. They perceive their classroom is not running effectively, tasks aren’t being completed, and meaningful learning is not occurring. Please understand, you do possess the desire to grow and ability to lead an effective classroom! What many first year teachers lack are the skills necessary to do so. What areas of the classroom management do you feel you need assistance with? What resources are you utilizing to aid you in this process? What additional resources would you like to have access to? Time limit: _____ minutes.
4. Take a moment to individually reflect on one to two routines or procedures that you can alter or implement to improve the management of your classroom. Although we will utilize our own resources to aid you in this process, to better honor your wishes and personalize your learning, in what specific ways can we best assist you? Time limit: _____ minutes.
5. Check-out. Reflect on your overarching goal as a first year teacher. For many of you it was to make a positive difference in a child’s life. Although it is not always apparent, your are doing just that! Your most memorable teacher from your childhood went through these same phases during their first year. Look at the difference they made! Listen to a message from your students. (Mentors need to gather positive remarks from the new teacher’s current students to share with the group the positive impact they are having.) Time limit: _____ minutes.

