

Possible Mentoring Activities

SCHOOL CULTURE

- Work with administrators and other “powers that be” to make decisions that will positively affect the assigned responsibilities of novice teachers. Some reduction in load is the ultimate goal, but any decisions that would *set the novice up to succeed* would go a long way to ensuring their remaining in the profession.
- Organize a Welcome Lunch (Breakfast, Brunch) hosted by the mentoring team for all new teachers. It may be better to hold this after most new teachers have been hired.
- Arrange for informal gatherings—away from the school—so everyone can get to know one another on a more personal level and in a more relaxed atmosphere. [This is often when the novice learns the *unwritten policies* and gains the advice that they were afraid to ask!]
- Early in the year, the mentoring team could share (and organize other teachers to share) the “pits” and “berries” of their first years of teaching. This might add momentum for changing the attitudes about “paying your dues.” Another option is to use the New Teacher Journey* (as we did in the workshop) to assure the new teachers that they are not the only ones to have experienced the anxieties and the exhilaration.
- Share the Voices from the Inside* summaries (or organize it as a JigSaw for the total faculty). Doing it on a larger scale would provide some good opportunities for interaction with colleagues not seen on a daily basis.
- Be sure the novice has access to necessary records and has the need to know information about his/her students (medical or personal information that might impact any student’s ability to learn). [Be aware that the novice needs to develop positive and high expectations for the success of all his/her students. Any information about students needs to be framed in ways that will help them acquire these positive expectations.]
- If the novice is experiencing challenges in dealing with any individual student, determine if it would be helpful for the novice to consult with a previous teacher or counselor who found productive ways to reach that child. Gaining those strategies will give the novice something to build on.
- Recognize the novice publicly for their contributions and efforts. In some schools, on a regular basis, the principal (or grade/department chair) gives a single rose (donated, of course) to anyone who has given of themselves for the good of others. Acknowledging *random acts of kindness* is a nice way to show appreciation.
- Begin a Double Entry Journal with the novice. The left hand side is for the novice’s concerns, questions, insights and the right hand side is for the mentor’s ideas, responses, thoughts, encouragement. A variation of that would be a larger version of the journal posted in the teachers’ workroom. All novices could post the questions and all mentors (all faculty and staff) could post their responses.

- Collaboratively create a Code of Conduct—or Rules We Will Live By. This might be a way to begin fresh—with expectations for interactions especially with novices, but actually for everyone. One rule might be: No one says, “Yeah, I’ve already tried that and it doesn’t work.”
- Share the workshop materials on Communication (Ladder of Inference* and Recognizing Your Perceptual Filters*).
- Have the educators in your school respond to the Relationship* and Communication* assessments.
- Use the tool--How Strong is The Support System in Your School?*-as a way to raise awareness about relationships and support.