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ROLE: **Mentor**

PURPOSE: **To increase instructional skills of the novice teacher and support schoolwide induction activities**

BY JOELLEN KILLION AND CYNTHIA HARRISON

Third in an eight-part series about roles of the school-based coach

School-based coaches often mentor new teachers in their school. Depending on the number of new teachers and expectations for support, this role can be a small or significant part of a coach's work week. Sometimes, rather than mentoring new teachers directly, coaches support other teachers who mentor novice teachers.
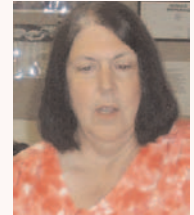

Coaches who mentor new teachers usually couple the role of mentor with other roles, most frequently classroom supporter and instructional specialist. They provide all types of assistance, from facilitating learning to demonstrating lessons, co-teaching, or planning instruction. Building a trusting relationship with novice teachers is essential for a successful partnership between coaches and novice teachers. Assisting new teachers to access and understand district and school expectations and resources is the coach's first level of support. Coaches offer on-the-spot assistance to novice or new-to-the-school teachers because they are "right down the hall" when needed. Coaches can usually adjust their schedules to be in a new teacher's classroom at a variety of times throughout the school day.

In the role of mentor, coaches help new teachers plan lessons, expand their

Our goal: All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work.

SCENARIO:
Mentor at work

On the first day of school, Joseph Garcia*, the student achievement coach at Monroe Middle School, visits the classrooms of each of the school's new teachers. He has helped each one set up classroom rules and sees them posted in the classroom. He observes teacher-student interactions to get a sense of how well each new teacher has created a climate conducive to learning. On the third day of school, he holds an after-school support group for new teachers and those new to the school in which they discuss managerial and instructional issues that arose during the first few days. Several teachers, even two experienced teachers, indicate that they want some help integrating more instruction for their non-English speaking students. Garcia shares a few quick, effective strategies and asks teachers to brainstorm additional ones.

During the second half of the support session, teachers are eager to share stories about their classrooms. Garcia structures the conversation to focus on teachers' decision making. He facilitates the group to generate and discuss multiple options for each of the situations they share. In one case, Garcia uses "peeling the onion" protocol to go more deeply into the problem solving. Garcia wants to ensure that the conversation moves quickly from complaining or story-telling to deep thinking and generating a variety of ideas for each situation. He believes this exercise will expand novice teachers' repertoires and give them greater decision-making flexibility.

After the first week of school, Garcia learns that one of the novice teachers is struggling with classroom management. He meets with the new teacher to plan a course of action. They agree that Garcia will co-teach the most challenging class for the next three days with the new teacher. Together, they agree on how to structure the classroom and how to divide the instructional responsibilities in the lessons they have planned. They also agree on how to handle behavior problems in the classroom. After each day of co-teaching, Garcia and the novice teacher debrief what occurred and plan the next lesson. Garcia also makes explicit the strategies he used during the lesson to manage student behavior and compliments the teacher on her effective behaviors. After co-teaching with this novice teacher, Garcia checks in daily with other new teachers and plans to observe each one the following week.

* Fictitious person and school

9 roles of the school-based coach

- Catalyst for change

- Classroom supporter

- Curriculum specialist

- Data coach (T3, Oct. 2005)

- Instructional specialist

- Learning facilitator (T3, Sept. 2005)

- **Mentor**

- Resource provider

- School leader

T3 presents one role of the school-based coach each month.

repertoire of instructional strategies, and differentiate instruction for diverse learners. They help novice teachers manage their classrooms, establish classroom routines, select and implement a discipline plan, and locate resources. Coaches often spend time modeling instruction or observing new teachers and giving feedback on their instruction. Coaches strive to develop in novice teachers a practice of continuous improvement by encouraging them to identify professional growth goals and to reflect on their practice. Coaches help both new-to-the-school and new-to-the-profession teachers understand and implement the district curriculum and acclimate to the school and district culture.

To support mentors, coaches help them solve problems, understand the developmental stages of teachers, identify strategies to assist novice teachers, locate resources, offer advice, and listen to their concerns. Coaches may meet monthly with mentors to discuss the progress of novice teachers, celebrate successes, and help mentors address specific problems in novice teachers' classrooms.

Knowledge and skills

To be effective in this role, coaches understand the stages of teacher development, know how to match support with teachers' expressed concerns, and have a wide array of classroom management, instructional, and assessment strategies to draw upon. Assessing novice teachers' needs and knowing how to respond to identified needs are important skills for coaches. Knowing

the personalities of new teachers and their learning preferences helps the coach select the best intervention to support new teachers without overwhelming them. Coaches, to be successful as mentors, use a wide range of relationship skills to help new teachers feel comfortable, yet challenged to improve. They use a delicate balance of pressure and support to encourage continuous improvement. Making agreements about how to work together effectively is crucial to having an effective working relationship between coaches and novice teachers.

One of the primary skill sets coaches use is in technical and cognitive coaching. Knowing how to engage teachers in analyzing their own practice, how to collect, analyze, and share data, how to provide specific and corrective feedback, and how to provide a range of alternatives are important skills for coaches. Coaches also depend on a wide range of knowledge and skills related to curriculum, planning, effective instruction, assessment, and classroom management.

Challenges

The greatest challenge a coach faces as a mentor is moving the novice teacher from dependence to independence as a teacher. Balancing directive coaching with more reflective, metacognitive coaching can be difficult, especially when novice teachers seek direction from their mentors. Coaches may find it easier to be more directive with novice teachers by advising them or giving them specific instructions rather than listening and encouraging them to identify their own alternative practices. Another challenge for coaches is to balance the time they spend with novice teachers. It is easy to spend a great deal of time with new teachers because they are often eager to learn and welcome any support. Yet coaches frequently have multiple responsibilities within a school and will want to plan how to balance their varied and often conflicting responsibilities. ◆

From
9 Roles of the School-Based Coach
by Joellen Killion and Cynthia Harrison

Creating a legacy of relationships

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

Consider this scenario: You are a staff developer at an inner ring suburban high school and half of your 300 teachers have taught for four years or less at your school.

That's the challenge faced by Renee DeWald as induction coordinator at Evanston Township High School in suburban Chicago.

ETHS had had a mentoring program for many years but, as the school grew more knowledgeable about the professional learning needs of all teachers, it also became more cognizant of the needs of new teachers. In 2002, DeWald, who had been a staff developer for the science department for several years, became the school's first induction coordinator. She continues to teach four class periods of chemistry each day with the rest of her time devoted to supporting other teachers.

Evanston, which is a single school district, had adopted Charlotte Danielson's components of professional practice as its evaluation tool. So it was logical to build the school's induction program around the five core values in the

Danielson framework: content knowledge and pedagogy; creating a climate of rapport and respect; effectively using classroom time; classroom management; and engaging students in learning.

"We asked 'what do teachers need to know and be able to do to be successful in those five areas?' " DeWald said.

The induction program begins with ETHS 101, a multi-day course for new teachers during the summer before they begin work. "We are essentially getting them ready for the first day and the first week. It's all the stuff you need to know before you hit the door," DeWald said.

Much of the curriculum is about expectations and school culture. Before the course, DeWald said new teachers often had issues because they simply didn't know "the range of how we do it here." Panels of students, teachers, and community members help to bridge that gap.

Once the school year begins, DeWald provides the kind of ongoing support that new teach-

Evanston Township High School chemistry teacher Renee DeWald, right, and Northwestern University professor Emma Tevaarwerk instruct students in a nanoscale science module.

DeWald is the induction coordinator at ETHS and lead teacher for the National Center for Learning and Teaching in Nanoscale Science at Northwestern University.

ers need. Her focus is on planning and classroom management. "If they're going to struggle, they're going to struggle in those two areas," she said.

DeWald also supports the mentor coordinators who oversee the work of the mentors who are assigned to every new teacher. "I need to make sure that mentor coordinators are getting the nuts and bolts information out to their teachers," she said.

In addition to DeWald, the school also has eight on-site staff developers, one for every academic department. These teachers are released from one class and one duty period each day to work with other teachers. The staff developers provide monthly support on curriculum and instruction issues for teachers in their departments, including but not limited to the novice teachers. In addition, every department has "standards leaders," teachers who work with the department chair on developing common lessons plans and common assessments.

Every new teacher is observed at least three times during their first year of teaching, either by DeWald or one of the department staff developers. Whoever does the observation, however, the protocol is the same. The observer has a pre-observation discussion with the teacher. The observers use a form of notetaking which they learned from Jon Saphier. (See example on p. 6.) If it's necessary, they also have a form to collect "interaction data" about student-to-student interaction to help the teacher determine who should and shouldn't be seated together.

During the second year at Evanston, new teachers attend a course on Skillful Teaching, based on the curriculum from Research for Better Teaching. DeWald teaches this class on each of the high school's 12 late-start days. "Because we've had so many new teachers, this has been really helpful in giving us a shared language so we could talk about instruction," she said.

DeWald said she has learned a great deal about teaching and leadership during her years as a teacher leader.

She stepped into her first staff development role when she was 30 years old. Her initial staff development work involved a lot of presenting which she was not wholly comfortable doing. For

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RENEE DeWALD

Job: Induction coordinator and chemistry teacher

District: Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois

Professional history: Joined ETHS staff in 1977 as a chemistry teacher. Has taught all levels of chemistry since then. Has been induction coordinator, science staff developer, standards leader for science department, North Central Accreditation Association self-study chair, facilitator for Research for Better Teaching, TESA and cooperative learning initiatives. Served on numerous school committees, including technology, staff development, human relations, and gender equity.

Education: Bachelor's degree in chemistry and secondary education, Knox College, Galesburg, Ill., plus 75 hours of additional study in science and education; master's degree in administration and supervision, National Louis University, Evanston, Ill.

Honors/accomplishments: NAACP Image Award, 2002. District's "most inspiring teacher award and district's excellence in mentoring award, 2002. Illinois State Board of Education's Those Who Excel Merit Award, 1996.

Professional service: Serves as lead science teacher, National Center for Learning and Teaching in Nanoscale Science and Engineering at Northwestern University. Member, Illinois State Board of Education Prairie State Standards-Setting Committee.

To continue this conversation, e-mail DeWald at dewald@eths.k12.il.us

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a long time, that was her only concept about how she could work with teachers.

Several years later, she and a colleague were co-teaching a course for teachers. While her colleague presented, DeWald sat with the participants and joined their conversations. "One day, it just hit me that staff development was really all about relationships. The one-on-one conversations that I could have with other people were much more powerful than anything that would come out of my mouth when I was standing up in front of them," she said.

Her personal discovery coincided with changes in the field about the most effective

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"One day, it just hit me that staff development was really all about relationships," said Renee DeWald.

Classroom observation

DIRECTIONS:

- Recreate this chart with the category headings. Use it as you observe classrooms.
- The first three columns should be factual observations. Use the final column to add comments on what has been observed.
- Use these notes to guide your discussion with the teacher. Do not give these notes to the teacher. This frees the observer to make personal notes to him or herself without concern that they will upset or embarrass the teacher.

Time	People involved / if names not known, write gender of student (ask for seating chart)	Activity that is occurring	Comments/ questions from observer
Note the time that activity is occurring. Strive for noting something every few minutes.	In this category, write the names of the students involved in the activity. Ask teacher for a seating chart before the observation begins. If you are uncertain about the student's name, note some key characteristics such as gender/race of student.	What action is occurring … teacher interaction with student, students talking with each other, student demonstrating their understanding of what the teacher has said, etc. Be specific.	Reserve your personal comments for this area.

SOURCE: Renee DeWald, Evanston Township High School

ways to shape teachers' content knowledge and practice. Although having expertise is important, always being the expert is not necessarily the most successful strategy for anyone who is trying to influence changes in teachers, she said.

"When a teacher is in a leadership position, it tends to be all about them. Eventually, you reach a point where it's not about you being in a leadership position, it's about the people you need to help.

"Often, teacher leaders are appointed or anointed because they are outstanding classroom teachers. You like that role because you want to help other teachers be like you because you know you're an outstanding teacher. But that's not the right role. You really need to see where someone else is and help them determine where they want to go in their practice and help them get there. It's not about them becoming like you," she said.

DeWald points with pride to several changes she initiated in the science department at Evanston. As the staff developer for the department, she confronted how isolated teachers were from each other and how uncomfortable they were with seeking support from each other. She saw staff meetings as an opportunity for shifting this culture.

She convinced her science colleagues to have each staff meeting in a different classroom, with the teacher in that room serving as the host. During the first half of the meeting, the host (or sometimes a hosting group) shared their ideas, perhaps an article they had read, or stories about their work with students.

"One teacher told me that she gained a new sense of respect for her colleagues. We were listening to people talk about what they wanted to talk about, what they valued about their teaching," DeWald said.

Much of her work now is focused on building relationships among teachers. "It doesn't always have to be the staff developer who knows everything," she said.

She drops in on veteran teachers classrooms to get a better idea of each teacher's strengths. "When I see a new teacher struggling in a particular area, I know who I can match them with. And when I see a new teacher doing something exciting that could benefit a veteran teacher, I can make that connection too," she said

"As you approach retirement (she has five more years to teach), you start to think about what your legacy is going to be. I think perhaps the most important legacy is to mentor young teachers," she said. ◆

"It doesn't always have to be the staff developer who knows everything," said DeWald.

The term, mentor, is derived from Greek mythology. Odysseus entrusted his son, Telemachus, to the care of his wise advisor, Mentor. Mentor assumes the role of guiding Telemachus into young adulthood in his father's absence.

SOURCE: "Mentoring," by Pam Robbins, a chapter in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning,* edited by Lois Brown Easton (Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004). Available through the NSDC Online Bookstore, store.nsdc.org.

Listen to understand teachers' unique needs

Teacher leaders in schools are innovators who are comfortable with change. "I don't understand why some teachers are so reluctant to implement new instructional strategies or curriculum while others are eager to learn," says Barak Azad, the math coach at Norton High School.* He faces what many staff developers do, the realization that teachers learn differently.

Azad is more comfortable working with less-experienced teachers and feels less comfortable with teachers who are his senior in years of experience. He finds that novice teachers want more direction and advice from him, while others are more reluctant to seek help or want to complain about the new curriculum. To be successful in his work, Azad navigates the needs of the individual learners, their personality, and how they respond to change. His training as a coach, especially on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model, provided him with a framework for identifying the concerns his colleagues express and guiding him to determine appropriate interventions.

Azad finds listening is the most important skill he can practice. He listens for his colleagues' concerns related to information, management, effect on students, or collaboration. If he hears a concern related to management, a common concern, he considers how to help a teacher organize her time, access materials needed to implement new instructional strategies, or how to eliminate less essential concepts from her classroom curriculum.

Another observation Azad makes is that teachers learn differently. One teacher benefits from his demonstration lessons. Another wants Azad to help him identify ways to reach the lowest achieving students in the class. Still another

LEARNING

Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

wants him to provide web sites to extend learning for more capable students. While Azad is comfortable with each of these tasks, he finds himself thinking about which produces the changes in instruction and curriculum that are essential to implement the new math program. He agrees to find web sites for the most senior member of the department because he hopes to establish trust and credibility with this teacher and to use that as an entrée to more significant support.

Azad's work as a math coach requires him to acknowledge the unique attributes of each teacher he coaches. They differ in years of experience, how they respond to change, and how they learn. As he works with each one, Azad listens to understand the needs or concerns expressed and then decides how he will intervene. He has formulated a few patterns among his school's faculty. The inexperienced teachers are more open to his suggestions and support. More experienced teachers are less open to his suggestions. Mid-career teachers can be either reluctant or eager for his support. While this pattern exists among his staff, he hears other math coaches describe their staff with different patterns. He vigilantly guards against pigeonholing any of his colleagues into stereotypes and strives to ensure that each one receives the support he or she wants to improve student learning. ◆

* Fictitious person and school

Joellen Killion is director of special projects for National Staff Development Council.

GUIDED REFLECTION: Mentors draw on special skills

Mentors in the Dalton (Ga.) Public Schools practice empathic writing and active listening skills using the tool below as a guide to help new teachers reflect on their work.

Mentors can use guided reflections in face-to-face conversations, in e-mail exchanges, or through journal writing. Doing reflections with a mentor moves the reflection from being a solitary event to a collaborative process which benefits both the novice teacher and the mentor teacher.

USING GUIDED REFLECTION

Objective of interaction	Teacher behavior/response	Mentor response
1. Accept feelings	**1a.** Teacher has difficulty discerning feelings in self and others. **1b.** Teacher discerns feelings in both self and students.	Share own feelings. Accept feelings.
2. Praise or encourage	**2a.** Teacher has high self-doubt when attempting new instructional strategies. **2b.** Teacher has confidence when attempting new instructional stragegies.	Offer frequent encouragement. Offer occasional support.
3. Clarify ideas	**3a.** Teacher perceives knowledge as fixed and employs a single "tried-and-true" model of teaching. **3b.** Teacher perceives knowledge as a process of successive approximations and employs a diversity of models of teaching.	Relate ideas to observed events and clarify how ideas affect students' lives. Accept and clarify ideas and encourage examination of hidden assumptions of pedagogy.
4. Prompt inquiry	**4a.** Teacher rarely reflects on teaching/learning process. **4b.** Teacher consistently reflects on diverse aspects of the teaching and learning process.	Ask questions about observed events in teaching/learning. Ask questions that encourage analysis, evaluation, divergent thinking and synthesis of theory/practice and broader societal issues.
5. Provide information	**5a.** Teacher disdains theory, prefers concrete thinking, and has difficulty recalling personal teaching events. **5b.** Teacher employs abstract thinking, shows evidence of originality in adapting innovations to the classroom, and is articulate in analysis of his or her own teaching.	Offer information in smaller amounts, relate to observed practice, and review regularly. Relate information to relevant theory and contrast with competing theories.
6. Give directions	**6a.** Teacher needs detailed instructions and high structure, is low on self-direction, and follows curriculum as if it were carved in stone. **6b.** Teacher is high on self-direction and needs low structure.	Offer detailed instructions, but encourage greater self-direction. Offer few directions.
7. When problems exist	**7a.** Teacher has difficulty accepting responsibility for problems and blames students. **7b.** Teacher accepts responsibility for actions.	Accept feelings and thoughts and use "I" messages. Accept feelings and thoughts.

SOURCE: Reiman, A.J. (1999, August). The evolution of the social roletaking and guided reflection framework in teacher education: Recent theory and quantitative synthesis of research. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 15*(6), 597-612.

Better mentoring stretches the teacher's self-reflection skills

Marty is a new mathematics teacher. He is earnest, hardworking, conscientious, and polite almost to the extreme. He teaches almost exclusively using a question-and-answer method. Marty says that the children have to learn the facts before they can interpret. The students must cover on schedule the material in the lesson plan. He follows his lesson plan literally. Amy, a seven-year veteran math teacher, has been trained as a mentor and assigned to work with Marty. Marty wants to please Amy and wants her to outline what he must do to gain approval.

Marty is an example of a new teacher who is adequate but highly dependent on others' feedback for direction and self-correction. Amy must encourage Marty to reflect on his own performance and become more able to identify his own areas for growth. Consider a possible e-mail exchange:

Example #1
Amy: Marty, tell me how you thought your lesson went.
Marty: I don't know. All right, I guess. Tell me how you thought it went.
Amy: You did the advance organizer well, but you clearly did not use more than one teaching strategy and your students ended up off task.

Amy gave Marty specific feedback and essentially a "grade" for the lesson. This interaction would approximate the exchange with a college supervisor — a recent experience for a first-year teacher. That sort of summative evaluation is important, but not for a mentoring relationship. The mentoring role is a formative one. If Marty is to become more independent and reflective, an empathic e-mail exchange might serve better.

Example #2
Amy: Tell me how your lesson went, Marty.
Marty: I don't know. All right, I suppose. Tell me how you thought it went.
Amy: It sounds like you're not sure about your lesson. Tell me some things that went well.
Marty:: I thought the question-and-answer format worked well as the students worked the entire period and I didn't have any problems with classroom management.
Amy: It sounds like you're pleased with maintaining control of the class and that you're comfortable with teaching through question-and-answer. Since we know a variety of teaching methods enhance student achievement, what are some other teaching strategies you might want to use?

Amy acknowledges Marty's feelings and then prompts him to reflect by using an open-ended statement. Amy also recognizes that Marty is reluctant to use a different teaching strategy, so she acknowledges the successful parts of the lesson and then stretches Marty to consider new methods.

The fundamental difference in the two exchanges is that, in the second example, Amy prompts Marty to reflect on his experience. In the first example, she gives a specific, brief, and direct answer, and Marty has to do little, if any, reflection. Stretching Marty's self-reflecting skills (e.g., his autonomy) ultimately benefits his students and his own professional growth. Additionally, Amy's reflection on Marty's teaching supports her own professional growth.

SOURCE: Originally published in "Tell me what went well with your lesson, Sam," by Zach Kelehear, *JSD,* Fall 2002.

DEFINITION:

• Mentoring is a intentional, confidential process through which an experienced teacher or professional provides a newcomer with information, support, resources, guidance, feedback, and assistance to help the newcomer refine his or her present skills, develop new ones, and enhance problem solving and decision making in a way that leaves its mark on knowledge and practice related to student learning.

• Mentors refine their own practices, learn from the newcomers, and enhance their reflective capacity. Both mentors and newcomers grow professionally from the relationship.

• A mentor is an experienced teacher who forges a learning partnership with a beginning teacher.

SOURCE: "Mentoring," by Pam Robbins, a chapter in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning,* edited by Lois Brown Easton (Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2004). Available through the NSDC Online Bookstore, store.nsdc.org.