MENTORING CONVERSATIONS
Language of Support

- Use non-verbal body language (smile, nod, make direct eye contact)

- Let the teacher know you hear, understand, and care; ask clarifying questions if you’re not sure of what you heard

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/newvdoe/mentor_program/index.html#
Language of Support (cont.)

- Allow the teacher to reflect
- Identify successes and challenges
- Help the teacher to think through alternative solutions to challenges and concerns

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/newvdoe/mentor_program/index.html#
DPS Special Education Teacher nods and uses eye contact
Build Relationships and Trust

- Getting to know each other
  - Make connections
  - Plan informal social time
  - Be sincere in your efforts to build the relationship

- Sharing
  - Share what works, resources
  - Learn from one another
Build Relationships and Trust
(cont.)

- Checking In
  - How are things going?
  - Try not to overwhelm the mentee - pick one area of focus
  - Offer help
- Collaborating
  - Plan together
  - Reflect together
Asking open-ended questions provides a way to identify and discuss issues and helps the new educator develop critical thinking skills.

Some examples of open-ended questions are:

What was one of your successes as a teacher in the past week?
How do you know when students are learning?
What is your greatest concern at this time?

Listening to your Mentee

- You can’t listen while you are talking. Refrain from talking too much.

- Avoid distractions: cell phones, computers, grading papers

- Give the mentee time to finish his or her thoughts
Concentrate on what is being said: actively focus on your mentee’s words, ideas, feelings.

Listen for what is not said. Challenging topics will take more time and care to discuss.
DPS High School Teacher helps his mentee reflect on her practice
Paraphrasing shows your mentee you care, understand and you are listening.

Which phrases work best for you?

What I hear you saying is …
From what I hear you say …
As I listen to you, I’m realizing that …
In other words, …
One thing I’ve noticed is …
I see what you mean when you say …

PBS Teacherline Peer Connection  www.pbs.org/peerconnection
Clarify if you’re not sure what you heard

- Let me see if I understand
- Tell me what you mean when you say …
- So are you suggesting that …
- I’m intrigued by (wonder about, interested in) …
- Would you tell me a little more about …
- It would help me understand if you’d give me an example of …
Questions to help your mentee reflect, hypothesize, and analyze

• What’s another way you might …
• What sort of impact do you think …
• How did you decide …
• What do you think would happen if …
• How might that idea work in your classroom?
• How will students demonstrate what they know and are able to do?
Asking questions to get Mentee to hypothesize
Phrases that encourage, provide choice and enhance independence

- What do you see as your next steps?
- How do you think the lesson went and what evidence do you have to support that?
- It will be interesting to see which of your ideas work out the best …
- I’d be interested in hearing more about…
- Something I’ve seen other teachers do is …

PBS Teacherline Peer Connection  www.pbs.org/peerconnection
Use Positive Language to foster communication

“Where did you go wrong in planning your lesson?”

Makes mentee feel:

- There was a problem planning the lesson
- They did something wrong
- They failed
Use Positive Language
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“When you do this lesson again, what will you do differently?”

Makes mentee feel:
- Analytical of the lesson
- Empowered with a choice about what to do
- Ownership of the changes that might be made
Mentee Questions

- Mentees may feel uncomfortable asking questions. Encouraging the beginning teacher to ask questions is an important part of mentoring.

- Try asking, “What questions do you have?” instead of, “Do you have any questions?”

References


- Another set of eyes is a consultancy group in Texas with conversation hints. http://www.anothersetofeyes.com/ (3/24/10)
Related Learning Opportunities

DPS Mentor Website

- Building Rapport: Mentor and Mentee Relationships
- Classroom Observations: Observing a Teacher as a Mentor
- More on Classroom Observations: Evidence vs. Opinion
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