Institutional Support: Achieving Instructor Success through Mentoring

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When asked to contemplate relationships that have made a difference in our lives—relationships that have given us the courage to do the things we think we cannot do, relationships that have guided our professional development or even changed the course of our lives—many of us think of mentoring relationships.

Ragins & Kram (2007)
Agenda

• What is a Mentor?
• Origin of the word “Mentor”
• Your experiences with Mentoring
• Mentoring program Goals & Objectives
• What are the Characteristics of a Good Mentor?
• Mentor Selection
• Mentor Roles & Responsibilities
• What are the challenges we face in implementing a Mentoring program?
• Program Oversight & Assessment
• Questions/Discussion
What is your definition of a Mentor?
Mentoring Program

• Mentor

– Comes from Homer’s Odyssey, Mentor was chosen to educate and support Odysseus’s son Telemachus when Odysseus departed for the Trojan war

(Villani, 2002)
Mentoring Program

- Mentor
  - Shared wisdom,
  - Promoted Telemachus’s career, and
  - Engaged him in a personal relationship.
Mentoring Program

- Today, the term Mentor

  - Means wise and trusted friend

  - Role includes: teacher, supporter, guide, protector, sponsor
Mentoring Program

- Mentoring is more than a fad.
- It is a well-researched helping relationship.

(Johnson & Ridley, 2004)
Mentoring

What have your experiences been with mentoring?
Mentor Program
8 Objectives & Goals

1. Provide one-on-one support for new teachers, prevent teacher isolation
2. Provide a collaborative support network
3. Support teacher morale and collegiality
4. Improve new teacher’s skills and performance
Mentor Program
8 Objectives & Goals

5. Build self-reflection
6. Maximize student achievement
7. Retain quality teachers
8. Build sense of professionalism and positive attitude

Guidelines for Mentor Teacher programs… (2000)
Mentoring is not

• “Supervisory in nature.
• In the professional development of teachers, mentors should not serve the supervisory function of evaluation on behalf of the management of a school or program.”

(Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, p. 207)
What are the characteristics of a good Mentor?
Characteristics of a Good Mentor

• A good Mentor is someone who is...
  – Easy to approach
  – Good at their own job
  – Caring, open, facilitative
  – Gives constructive, positive feedback
Characteristics of a Good Mentor

- A good Mentor is someone who …
  - Stays neutral
  - Is good at his/her own job
  - Actively questions mentee/protégé
  - Provides subtle guidance but ensures mentee makes the decisions
Mentor Selection

• Options:

- Mentors select Mentees/protégés (making a good “match”)

- Protégés/mentees select Mentors
Mentor Selection

- At DLI, Department Chairs appoint mentors (mentoring is a voluntary role for experienced teachers)

  • Mentor Selection (using 360-degree* criteria)

  * Excellent teacher evaluations (Department Chair’s appraisals and student ratings), positive classroom observations, well-respected by peers, …
Mentor Selection

• Mentors should:
  – Have taken in-service course & worked for a full cycle of the program (6 months – 1 year)
  – Demonstrate outstanding performance
  – Be skilled at providing instructional support
  – Have the ability to provide constructive feedback & share instructional materials and ideas
Mentor Selection

- Mentors should:
  - Possess effective interpersonal & collaborative skills
  - Have a positive attitude toward their school and their colleagues
  - Be sensitive to the needs of others and exercise good judgment
Mentor Selection

• Mentors should:
  – Be committed to their own professional growth and learning
  – Be open to a variety of teaching styles
  – Maintain flexibility so novice teachers can be reassigned if initial pairing does not work
Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

• The Mentor must be willing to:

  - Be proactive in contacting the mentee; maintain communication; make mentee feel he/she can contact mentor anytime

  - Assist and guide with schedules, curriculum, instructional materials, student counseling, other academic matters

  - Provide opportunities to observe and participate in each other’s classes and work
Mentoring Program

New Faculty Comments:

• My mentor helped me gain an understanding of how DLI “works”
• Insight of an experienced teacher is very valuable
• As a mentor, when you help others, you reflect on your own teaching
• I received help with lesson planning and preparing authentic materials
• Mentoring allows for self-reflection-I re-evaluate methods
• The UEL Mentoring program has assisted me in becoming a more proficient teacher
Mentor Comments:

- As a mentor, when you help others, you reflect on your own teaching
- Mentoring allows for self-reflection, I re-evaluate methods
Challenges

What challenges do we face when providing mentoring to our new employees?
• Department Chairs and Academic Specialists oversee the program and check for effectiveness/ detect problems and problem-solve…
Program Assessment

• Assessment is based on its effectiveness in meeting the following goals:

1. Retaining quality teachers
2. Improving teaching performance
3. Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality
4. Facilitating a seamless transition into the first year of teaching at DLI
Questions

• Questions / Discussion

• Further thoughts on Mentoring....
References
