



DIVISION SCOLAIRE

LOUIS RIEL

SCHOOL DIVISION

Teacher Mentorship in the Louis Riel School Division

*Inspiring Potential.
Initier les possibilités.*



CONTEXT

In Louis Riel we view teaching as a journey and the school division as a true community of learners. Each teacher in Louis Riel is to develop the following *indicators of professional practice*:

- develop and maintain safe and positive learning environments
- develop and implement an effective instructional process
- maintain professional relationships
- develop professionally and contribute to the educational community

(LRSD Policy GCNA)

For this to occur, we believe that effective supports need to be in place to assist teachers on their individual journeys.

DEFINITIONS

Mentoring

- A process in which a more experienced person teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less experienced person for the purposes of promoting the latter's professional development and well-being.
- Takes place in the context of a reciprocal, ongoing, and supportive relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher (Anderson & Snyder, 1988).
- Extends beyond an experienced teacher sharing their knowledge - materials and ideas are shared by the mentor, but together with the new teacher, they can co-create new strategies, new materials, and new thinking as part of a collaborative team.
- Requires openness from both the new teacher, and the mentor, to plan together, consider action, research, collaborate, and to reflect upon their individual practice and growth.
- For new teachers, professional, instructional, and personal domains all need to be considered.



(Alberta Teachers Association [ATA], p. 9)

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role and Responsibilities of the Mentor

- Continue to demonstrate effective teaching while serving as a mentor;
- understand the typical needs and challenges of the beginning teacher;
- support for the beginning teacher within the school culture;
- provide feedback to the beginning teacher related to professional and instructional domains;
- assist the beginning teacher in identifying personal strengths and planning for further professional growth;



(Enz, 1992.)

Basic Assumptions for Success

- Formal mentoring helps new teachers move beyond 'orientation' to exploring their professional practice and participating in a learning community.
- Both participants gain from the experience.
- It takes a certain disposition and set of skills to work with adult learners; great teachers do not necessarily make great mentors!
- Mentors move from being great teachers, to probably novice mentors, before they can become expert mentors.

Mentor "Traps"

- *I can help.* Sometimes the beginning teacher needs to find their own way. Experience is also a powerful teacher!
- *I know best.* Beginning teachers are here to learn. Be honest with yourself, if you relish compliments from your beginning teacher, you may be using them to fulfill your own needs. Be careful, this is a dangerous trap.
- *You need me.* This lays the groundwork for a relationship built on dependency. The focus should be on improving the beginning teacher's practice.
- Avoid jargon and explain it when others use it.
- *I showed you last week. Remember?* Avoid patronizing remarks. So much of what we take for granted has been learned over time.
- *I'll tell the principal how well you are doing.* Mentors are support providers not evaluators.
- *He did well because of me.* Let go and celebrate the success of your colleague.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Beginning Teacher

- Understand they have much to learn about putting their knowledge to work;
- develop active listening and consultation skills;
- discuss and reflect upon a collaborative mentorship plan with the mentor;
- develop their own teaching style over time;
- become a reflective practitioner to enhance their teaching effectiveness;
- participate in the analysis of teaching practices to nurture their own teaching effectiveness and that of others;
- grow in areas that include day-to-day survival, concerns about managing responsibilities, and their impact upon others.

Beginning Teacher “traps”

- *I don't need help.* Although you may feel that you can do it on your own, it is a good idea to listen to experience.
- *I don't know anything.* There are a hundred details to teaching that university simply cannot prepare you for. You know lots; you are full of the best and newest ideas.
- *I'm the only one having problems.* All teachers experience roadblocks, it is the nature of our very complex endeavor.
- *I'll get organized this weekend.* Well teachers are effective teachers: don't forget to take time for yourself.

Mentoring vs. Evaluating

- Evaluating the beginning teacher is not a function of mentoring.
- Trust is essential in a mentoring relationship. It is imperative that the mentor be viewed as a trusted colleague rather than an evaluator or judge.
- Mentoring is collegial; evaluating is hierarchical.
- Mentoring is ongoing; evaluating is defined by division policy.
- Mentoring encourages self-reliance and growth; evaluating judges individual teaching performance.
- Mentoring keeps data confidential; evaluating uses data to judge.