

MENTORING EACH OTHER

Teachers listening, learning, and sharing to create more successful classrooms

Lana Parker | Diane Vetter

@Hawker Brownlow Education



Hawker Brownlow
Education a Solution Tree company

Contents

Introduction 5

Chapter 1: The Mentoring Partnership 8

- A Mentoring Disposition 9
 - Mentoring Move: Making Connections* 11
- The Mentoring Process 12
 - Professional Demeanor 13
 - Communication Skills 14
 - Understanding Learners 15
 - Mentoring Move: Jumpstart the Relationship* 15
 - Active Engagement 16
- Mentoring vs Modelling 16
 - Mentoring Move: Model to Mentor* 18
- Attributes of a Mentor 19
 - Positivity 21
 - Mentoring Move: Positivity as Practice* 21
- Building Trust 23
 - Mentoring Move: Relational Trust* 24
- Clarifying Expectations 25
 - Mentoring Move: Walk 'n' Talk* 27

Chapter 2: Knowledge and Skills Development 35

- Articulating Philosophies and Practice 36
 - Mentoring Move: Articulation to Action* 38
- Co-acting to Share What You Know 39
 - Mentoring Move: Co-acting for Learning* 41
- Making Your Thinking Visible 42
 - Mentoring Move: Thinking Aloud* 44
- Targeted Feedback 45
 - Mentoring Move: Targeted Feedback* 47
- Supporting Self-Assessment 48
 - Mentoring Move: Stoplight Self-Assessment* 50
- Identifying Needs 51
 - Mentoring Move: Needs Analysis* 52

Chapter 3: Reciprocal Learning 60

- Transitioning from Traditional Power Dynamics 62
 - Mentoring Move: What I Bring* 63
- Responding to Each Other's Needs 64
 - Mentoring Move: Sharing Values* 65
- Aiming for Mutual Growth 66
 - Parallel Learning 67
 - Mentoring Move: I'd Like to Learn More About...* 68

Taking Risks Together	69
<i>Mentoring Move: Third Points</i>	71
Negotiating Differences	71
<i>Mentoring Move: The Important Thing</i>	73
Exploring Professional Learning	75
<i>Mentoring Move: Inquiring Collaboratively</i>	76

Chapter 4: Mentoring as Leadership 85

Opening the Classroom Door	86
<i>Mentoring Move: Opening Up Practice</i>	88
Making Space for Open Minds	89
<i>Mentoring Move: A Space for Open Minds</i>	90
Challenging Conversations	91
<i>Mentoring Move: Wondering</i>	93
Documentation for Professional Growth	94
<i>Mentoring Move: Scaling Questions</i>	96
Leading Learning	96
<i>Mentoring Move: A Critical Lens</i>	98
Mentoring as a Catalyst for Leadership	99
<i>Mentoring Move: Tomorrow's Leaders</i>	100

Chapter 5: Creating Mentoring Communities 108

Benefits of Mentoring Communities	109
Less Isolation	110
Exponential Knowledge-Building	110
Different Perspectives	111
Growth Mindset	111
<i>Mentoring Move: Valuing Community</i>	111
Building a Mentoring Community	112
<i>Mentoring Move: Planning Community</i>	113
Sharing Stories	114
<i>Mentoring Move: Storytelling</i>	116
Strengthening Partnerships through Witnessing	117
Content	117
Characteristics	117
<i>Mentoring Move: Witnessing</i>	119
Advancing School and System Goals	119
<i>Mentoring Move: Scaling Learning</i>	121
Adapting Strategies for Use with Students	122
<i>Learning Move: Making Connections</i>	122
<i>Learning Move: Needs Analysis</i>	123
<i>Learning Move: Stoplight Self-Assessment</i>	123
<i>Learning Move: What I Bring</i>	124
<i>Learning Move: Sharing Values</i>	124
<i>Learning Move: Storytelling</i>	124

Final Thoughts 132

Professional Resources 133

Index 135

Introduction

As teachers who have worked with students in K–12 schools and adult education, teacher candidates in preservice education, and new teachers entering the profession, we came to realize that formal preparation for the role of mentor is often not readily available. For teachers who are leading professional practice in their schools by working with preservice or novice teachers, we recognize that the role of mentor may not be clearly defined. Teachers with a few years of experience and a willingness to open their classroom doors may be taking on the role of host, associate, or collaborating teacher with only a school board or faculty of education handbook to guide their way. Many of the teachers we met while we researched mentoring indicated that, in taking on the role of supporting a new colleague or preservice teacher, they did not actually think of themselves as mentors.

Mentoring is a complex process and each mentor/mentee relationship is unique. These relationships function within an education environment that meets the specific requirements of the district and reflects the diversity of school communities. The process of mentoring generally happens within the confines of a busy school day. That means that time is a precious commodity and that making good use of that time is key to a successful mentoring experience for both mentor and mentee.

Mentoring Each Other: Teachers Listening, Learning, and Sharing to Create More Successful Classrooms is written to support the dedicated teaching professionals who are continually seeking to improve their practice, for both the children in their classrooms and the teachers of tomorrow they mentor. It provides accessible and practical strategies that can be easily implemented to support and enhance the mentoring and learning process.

Our work and research in education has led us to the understanding that becoming and being a teacher and mentor is multifaceted and dynamic. It involves relationship-building, knowledge and skills development, reciprocal learning, leadership, and community. Our research in the area of mentoring advances the concept of mentoring as a shared process that considers a reciprocal dynamic, teacher leadership, and collaborative learning within community. We offer the reader a new perspective on mentoring and the role of the mentor, along with tools to support mentoring as an inquiry-based, shared endeavor that values equity, telling our stories, and relationship-building.

We believe that mentoring capacity and teacher growth are linked by several common elements:

- Honest self-reflection
- Openness to listening and sharing
- Willingness to make professional practices and vulnerabilities public
- Recognition of the value of reciprocal and active learning
- Collaboration within professional communities that adapt and change as learning evolves

This book addresses the questions, opportunities, and challenges that teachers face in their mentoring relationships and classroom practice. Embedded in its chapters are relevant and purposeful Mentoring Moves, very specific tools and strategies that can be used to support mentoring and to develop reflective practice. They were developed as a targeted response to teachers' comments and questions that appeared in our research. Mentoring Moves are practical and easily implemented in daily practice. Some of these Mentoring Moves are known education strategies that we have adapted to mentoring contexts; others are original ideas we have implemented in our research and used successfully in our work with mentors and mentees over the past few years.

The chapters in this book can be read sequentially or accessed according to the area of need that emerges within the professional context. This overview will give you an idea of where to seek out the information you need.

In Chapter 1 we consider relationship-building as foundational to The Mentoring Partnership, specifically addressing the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a mentor? (See page 9.)
- What does the process of mentoring look like? (See page 12.)
- How does mentoring differ from modelling? (See page 16.)
- What attributes best support the role of mentor? (See page 19.)
- How might we build trust in a mentoring relationship? (See page 23.)
- What do mentees expect of their mentors? (See page 25.)

In Chapter 2 we take a close look at Knowledge and Skills Development as a process of shared learning, and consider the following questions:

- How might I articulate my philosophies of education and my practice as a teacher? (See page 36.)
- How might I share what I know? (See page 39.)
- How might I make visible to a mentee the thinking and rationale that underpin my teaching? (See page 42.)
- How might I communicate effective feedback on classroom practices and processes? (See page 45.)
- How might I support mentees in self-assessing skills development? (See page 48.)
- How might I help mentees identify their specific needs? (See page 52.)

In Chapter 3 we reflect on new ways of thinking about mentoring as an experience of Reciprocal Learning, to discuss the following questions:

- How and why might we transition from the traditional expert/novice roles to partners in learning? (See page 62.)
- How might the mentoring partnership respond to the unique needs and qualities of the mentor and mentee? (See page 64.)

- How might we make the mentoring experience mutually rewarding and beneficial? (See page 66.)
- How might mentoring support productive risk-taking to facilitate growth? (See page 69.)
- How might we negotiate difference? (See page 71.)
- How might action research and inquiry facilitate mentor and mentee professional learning? (See page 75.)

In Chapter 4 we look at Mentoring as Leadership, raising the following questions:

- How might opening my classroom door demonstrate leadership? (See page 86.)
- How might I cultivate a space for open minds? (See page 89.)
- How might we navigate challenging conversations? (See page 91.)
- How might documentation for professional growth and development support leadership? (See page 94.)
- How might I lead learning? (See page 96.)
- How might mentoring serve as a catalyst for additional leadership roles in education? (See page 99.)

Finally, in Chapter 5 we discuss Creating a Mentoring Community, bringing the action of mentoring beyond the classroom, with a focus on the following questions:

- Why should we endeavor to form mentoring communities? (See page 109.)
- How might we begin to build a mentoring community? (See page 112.)
- How might storytelling contribute to mentoring communities? (See page 114.)
- How might witnessing strengthen partnerships? (See page 117.)
- How might mentoring communities enable progress toward school and system goals? (See page 119.)
- How might the strategies I use with my mentoring community be implemented with the students in my classroom? (See page 122.)

We trust that that our Mentoring Moves and the stories we share will be valuable to teachers as they continue on their journey to teaching excellence and as they mentor those teachers whose journey is just beginning.