

Tools index for Chapter 8		
Tool	Title	Purpose
8.1	Integrating Standards for Professional Learning	Use this guide to integrate Standards for Professional Learning into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning.
8.2	Choosing a learning design	Use this tool to explore and select professional learning designs to achieve a goal.
8.3	Learning lab: Peer observations	Use this tool to coordinate peer observations in another teacher's classroom to focus on specific instructional strategies.
8.4	Collaborative assessment conference	Use this tool to facilitate an examination of student work to promote reflection on instruction and student learning.
8.5	Results-based coaching Lesson study	Use this protocol to guide teachers in working collaboratively to design and observe instruction to improve instruction and increase collegiality.

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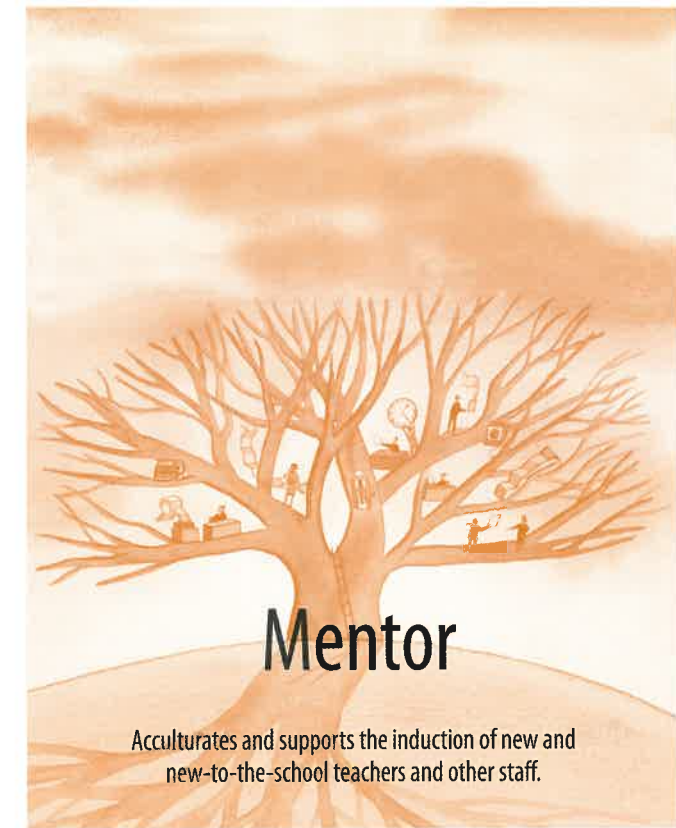
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Coaches, in either a formal or informal role, mentor new teachers in their school. Depending on the number of new teachers in the school or district and expectations or requirements for support, this role can be a small or significant part of a coach's responsibilities.

The role of a mentor is a *both-and* role. As mentors, coaches provide the moral, emotional, and psychological support new professionals need so that they gain confidence and efficacy and a sense of belonging within a professional community. Coaches couple this role with other roles such as curriculum specialist, instructional specialist, learning facilitator, or classroom supporter to provide the professional support new or new-to-the-school teachers require. Because student success depends on teaching quality, it is especially important that new teachers develop the capacity to implement the school or district instructional framework and curricular program as quickly as possible so that

their students' learning opportunities are not put on hold. Whether coaches serve directly as mentors to new teachers or new-to-the-school staff, or support other teachers who serve as mentors in the school, they contribute to the development of other professionals.

Mentors support teachers in several ways

Coaches may serve as mentors or coordinate and support others who serve as mentors within the school. Mentors ensure that new teachers and those new to the school or district are acclimated and acculturated into their new workplace. Acclimation, often referred to as orientation or on-boarding, is the process of helping a new employee understand the rules of the road, such as the schedule for the school day, where to find answers to questions about employment benefits, or procedures for performance reviews. This type of information is

“I am proud of the relationships I have developed with the new teachers I am working with. These relationships have allowed me to work closely with teachers in planning lessons, co-teaching, offering regular observation/feedback, and conducting bimonthly data-driven instruction meetings with grade levels. I am far from perfect, but I’m proud of the growth I have made in the four coaching roles and the growth teachers are making based on our work together.”

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frequently delineated in handbooks and discussed in orientation meetings, yet when new employees receive these details in large-group meetings or provided in online programs, they may be too overwhelmed to ask questions or not know where to go to get their questions answered. Mentors check in frequently with their mentees, especially in the early days and weeks of a new position, to address their questions or unmet needs (see Tool 9.1).

Another aspect of a mentor’s work is making sure that new teachers have the tools and equipment to do their work and know the procedures and policies that guide teacher expectations. New teachers need access to hardware, classroom equipment, curricula documents, student data, unit plans, office supplies, student

texts, and other learning tools to do their job. Another aspect of this work is making sure teachers understand and can use schoolwide procedures such as those for classroom behavior, family communication, assessment, data, and reporting among many others.

Sometimes, rather than mentoring new teachers directly, coaches support or coordinate other teachers who mentor novice teachers. Because of the time needed to support new teachers, it is best that coaches mentor no more than two or three new teachers. Working with teacher mentors, therefore, may be the best solution. Besides coaching teacher mentors, coaches may periodically convene them to examine and address challenges new teachers might be experiencing, identify various types of support or professional learning new teachers may want or need, celebrate successes, and identify ways to support new staff. They may also help teacher mentors address specific problems in novice teachers’ classrooms. As a part of their effort to coordinate support, the coaches ensure that all new teachers have equitable assistance to ensure the highest level of success (see Tool 9.2).

When the district or state requires induction and mentoring, a coach serving as a mentor or mentor coordinator may support new teachers or mentors in meeting and documenting various induction and orientation requirements, providing the training required for new teachers, or helping the new teachers implement their learning in their classrooms. For example, if a new teacher is unfamiliar with the district’s application of visible thinking maps (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011), mentors help teachers know what is expected, how to gain the necessary knowledge to use the maps successfully, and how to access resources needed to implement the maps in their classrooms.

Mentors also constantly work with new staff members to build a trusting relationship that supports a sense of belonging and acculturation into the community. Acculturation is the process of interfacing one’s individual culture with a new culture in which one lives or works, such as when a person enters a new place of employment. A trusting relationship with novice teachers is also essential for a successful partnership between coaches and novice teachers who want to succeed. Trust opens the door for the novice to seek assistance, be open to engaging in coaching, and be willing to examine alternatives to current practices. It is also a way to reinforce the principle that all professionals, regardless of their level of experience, are continually engaged in learning. Whether a seasoned professional or novice, a new employee is more effective, satisfied, and has a stronger sense of belonging when he or she quickly becomes a member of the new community while being respected and trusted as an individual. Belonging, according to some researchers (Lee, Park, & Ban, 2016; Lieberman & Eisenberg, 2009), increases satisfaction, motivation to achieve, and performance of employees.

New teachers experience a pattern of development as professionals. Knowing how to help new professionals is an important responsibility of mentors. For example, novice teachers experience excitement and anxiety early in their first few months of teaching. These feelings turn into disillusionment near the end of the first marking period, a time during which novice teachers may question their decision to become a teacher and their adequacy and efficacy. Mentors are particularly attuned to indicators of this period of development so they can provide adequate emotional support as well as capacity development. Typically, as the year unfolds after riding through

Areas of focus for new teachers

Classroom behavior and environment

- Classroom set-up;
- Routines for transitions, attendance, assignments, movement, etc.;
- Discipline;
- Student-engagement strategies;
- Grouping strategies.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum implementation;
- Plan and organization of instruction;
- School or district instructional focus such as thinking maps or learning targets;
- Assessment and data analysis;
- Content knowledge.

Students

- Individual student learning goals, needs, preferences, etc.;
- Student background and culture;
- Student interests;
- Previous student performance.

Parents/Families

- Relationships;
- Preferred communication approach;
- Community resources.

School context

- Expectations;
- Policies and procedures;
- Relationship among colleagues;
- School goals, improvement plan, history, etc.;
- Resources.

Professionalism

- Social media;
- Personal and professional work balance;
- Relationships with colleagues;
- Feelings of success, failure, and rejection;
- Professional growth opportunities;
- Dress and behavior.

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this difficult time, novice teachers settle into a period of rapid growth and development. Mentors want to encourage continuous improvement, challenge with just the right amount of opportunities for growth, and identify and reinforce strengths as they become increasingly more evident. The sidebar, “Areas of focus for new teachers” (see p. 93), includes a list of topics from which mentors may choose to focus their interactions with novice teachers. Selecting the salient areas is a significant decision for mentors to make as they support the career development of new teachers.

Mentors need certain knowledge, skills, and practices

To be effective in this role, coaches tap into a broad body of knowledge and a skill set that helps them understand and assess the needs of new teachers, personalize their response to teachers’ needs, and weave together multiple roles to develop new teachers’ professionalism. Mentors understand the stages of teacher development so that they can anticipate needs and stretch capacity so that new teachers achieve a high level of performance. This knowledge includes recognizing the natural development of the novice professional who moves first from a concern with self to concerns with competence and impact on students, and, eventually, moves toward innovation, creation, and generativity. They know how to assess teachers’ needs and concerns, match support with teachers’ expressed needs and concerns, and respond to needs with versatility and flexibility by moving into and out of other roles such as classroom supporter, curriculum specialist, or instructional specialist.

Knowing how to build trusting relationships, coaches acknowledge and appreciate the emotional ups and downs that many new

teachers experience without disempowering, discounting, or rescuing them. Instead, coaches help develop new teachers’ capacity to problem solve, self-analyze, reflect about their own practice, and celebrate successes (see Tool 9.3). Coaches are cautious about assuming control over novice teachers, especially when they are struggling. Acknowledging that mistakes are an essential part of learning, coaches encourage new teachers to anticipate problems and consider solutions in advance so they are prepared and confident when problems occur.

Coaches as mentors face challenges

Mentors face several challenges in their work with novice teachers. One of the greatest challenges is balancing support with developing capacity. Coaches walk a fine line between supporting new teachers and expecting that they are professionals who meet the educational needs of all students.

Acting as a mentor can challenge the coach to know when to give advice and when to facilitate decision making. Coaches frequently want to advise, guide, provide direction, give strategies, or fix problems rather than developing the teacher’s capacity to think analytically, consider alternatives, and make an informed decision. Balancing directive coaching with collaborative and non-directive coaching can be difficult, especially when novice teachers seek specific direction from their mentors. Using a gradual release model with new teachers is essential to supporting novice teachers. By helping novice teachers move along a continuum of development, coaches encourage them to become expert professionals who make instructional decisions that make a positive impact on student learning (see Tool 9.4).

SNAPSHOT

A coach as a mentor

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 new teachers and the two experienced teachers who are new to the school indicate that they want help with meeting the needs of non-English speaking students. Garcia shares a few quick, effective strategies and asks teachers to brainstorm additional ones. He wants them to have quick wins, and plans to bring new ideas to their next meeting.

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. Specifically, Garcia uses the “Consulting Trio” protocol to encourage teachers to explore options for situations they encounter and to practice decision making. Garcia wants to ensure that the conversation moves quickly from complaining or storytelling to deep

thinking and generating a variety of ideas for each situation. He believes this protocol will expand the novice teachers’ repertoires and give those teachers greater decision-making flexibility. After several weeks teachers find that they value the Consulting Trio and find opportunities to use it with one another and their students. Teachers report that they gain many options they had not known about or considered.

After the first week of school, Garcia observes that one of the novice teachers is struggling with classroom routines. He meets with the new teacher to plan a course of action. They agree that Garcia will be in the classroom for the next three days, two to co-teach the literacy block and then to observe the new teacher lead the block on his own on the third day. Together, they plan the lessons for the co-teaching days and agree on how to structure the classroom and handle instructional responsibilities in the lessons. They also agree how to handle behavior issues that arise when they are co-teaching. After each day of co-teaching, Garcia and the novice teacher debrief and review the plan for the next lesson. Garcia engages the teacher in analyzing strategies used during the lesson to manage student behavior to determine their effectiveness. Over the next few weeks, Garcia checks in daily with this new teacher and at least weekly with the other new teachers.

**Fictitious name and school*

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Some coaches struggle with patience as they work with new teachers. Because they are expert professionals, often with many years of experience, they find it difficult to remember that teaching quality, like any area of expertise, takes years to develop. Remembering that these new teachers are the future workforce in schools often helps coaches realize how important it is to be deliberate with these teachers in building their skills. Being able to pinpoint the high-leverage areas for improvement is crucial to help novice teachers attain rapid success in performance and be able to provide equity in opportunity to learn for students (see Tool 9.5).

Another challenge for coaches is balancing the time they spend with novice teachers. Spending too much time with new teachers is easy to do because they are usually eager to learn and welcome support. It may also send a message inadvertently that coaching is only for inexperienced teachers or cause other teachers to underutilize coaching support. Yet coaches frequently have multiple responsibilities within a school and strive to balance their varied and sometimes conflicting responsibilities. Depending on a coach's primary responsibilities, he or she may choose to develop the capacity of other teachers to serve as mentors for novice or new-to-the-school teachers. Doing so builds leadership capacity in other teachers and distributes leadership responsibilities among teachers. Coaches then are free to spend more time with all staff. If other teachers share in mentoring responsibilities, the school may aim for a teacher-to-mentor ratio of no more than one new teacher for each mentor. One resulting benefit for novice teachers and those new to the school is that they receive more support from their mentor than they might from a single coach who is serving many new teachers.

Conclusion

When serving as a mentor for new teachers or new-to-the-school teachers, coaches acknowledge the individual differences among teachers and adapt their supports to the needs of teachers. At the same time, however, they keep in mind that student success depends on the quality of teaching in each classroom. When they are supporting other teachers who serve as mentors and coordinate mentoring support, they are developing the leadership capacity of others.

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Tools index for Chapter 9

Tool	Title	Purpose
9.1	Mentor-teacher log	Use this tool to track, document, and follow up on mentor-teacher interactions.
9.2	Email journal for mentor and mentee communication	Use this tool as a model format for ongoing communication between mentor and mentee.
9.3	Continuum of mentor support	Use this tool to define the level of support that is appropriate for mentors to be giving to mentees at different points in time.
9.4	Observation techniques	Use this tool to provide mentors and mentees a variety of observational tools with which to examine classroom practice.
9.5	Reflection on mentoring goals and process	Use this tool to help mentors and mentees reflect on their process of pursuing and achieving agreed-upon goals and process.