

Title of Session: Teaching Teachers
Moderator: Mary Thompson
Title of File: 20060302teachteach
Date: March 2, 2006

Room: Teaching Teachers Group

MaryFT: Vicki, what are you planning to do with your Master's in EdTech?

VickiGst10: Get a pay raise?

RaeR joined the room.

MaryFT: Welcome Rae

BjB: good job, Rae

RaeR: hello

DavidWe . o O (pay raise is good)

VickiGst10: I also thought it would be helpful as I see more classes are being taught on computers and online.

DavidWe nods

BjB: Rae, please introduce yourself to this group...I think you'll find it a great resource

MaryFT: yes Distance Learning and online modules are becoming prevalent

MaryFT: lots of opportunities for integrating tech into the classroom

RaeR: I am the Director of the Foundation Program for George Mason University on its new campus in the United Arab Emirates

MaryFT: wow! impressive

MaryFT: what is the Foundation Program?

RaeR: hmm.. you should be in my shoes and you would not think so....

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I work to help teachers understand more about educational technology. I'm a Help Desk volunteer here in Tapped In. I'm in New Jersey, near New York City

RaeR: can be a tough job

MaryFT nods

RaeR: I am really interesting in teacher development

MaryFT: Okay...welcome to the inaugural session of Teaching Teachers

RaeR: a Foundation Program is the English Language Institute

MaryFT: our focus during tonight's discussion is strategies for mentoring teachers

RaeR: Foundation Program is what it is called in the Middle East

MaryFT: My name is Mary Thompson

DavidWe is stunned

DavidWe: Really?

DavidWe smiles

MaryFT: I teach preservice and graduate technology courses at the University of Houston

MaryFT nods gravely at David

KarlaT: I am one of her students and she is one of the best professors I have ever had!!

MaryFT is thinking about moving David to one of the front desks...close to the teacher

MaryFT thanks Karla for the rave review

DavidWe sits on his hands, again

DavidWe hopes Karla gets a raise, too

MaryFT: I am also a certified Master Technology Teacher

MaryFT: the MTT program is a Texas system for helping schools find qualified mentor teachers for technology in schools

MaryFT: what experiences have you all had with mentoring? Either mentee or mentor...

KarlaT: Right now, as a student teacher, I have many teachers helping me with lesson plans, time management and classroom management. However, due to the fine technology education at U of H, I am holding my own technology-wise.

MaryFT: so the inservice teachers at your school are acting as your mentors Karla?

VickiGst10: I started a full time job in the middle of the year about 8 years ago and my official mentor was a band director so he could not help me with many of the questions I had about teaching math and classroom management.

MaryFT: several or just one or two?

MaryFT nods to Vicki

MaryFT: I had a similar experience

KarlaT: Really, my site based teacher is my main mentor, but everyone is eager to help. It's really been a wonderful experience.

MaryFT: my "mentor" introduced herself to me at the end of the school year and asked me to sign her form

RaeR: I am mentoring my teachers in way to use technology for assessment

KarlaT: Did you sign it??

VickiGst10: I am a designated mentor for new teachers learning how to use Gradequick at my school.

MaryFT: I am sorry to say that I did...I was very young at the time!

KarlaT: Vicki - how many teachers do you help with Gradequick?

VickiGst10: First year teachers do what they are asked to do. Then you learn.

MaryFT nods

MaryFT: Karla...what strategies do you find most helpful in your mentoring sessions with your cooperating teachers?

VickiGst10: I have helped numerous teachers over the past few years.

MaryFT: Vicki, what strategies do you find most successful when mentoring teachers in a new program?

VickiGst10: Some teachers take a lot more mentoring than others.

DavidWe smiles

BjB smiles too

KarlaT: First of all, they make themselves available.

MaryFT: Rae, what resources do you use in mentoring for technology assessment?

MaryFT: indeed Vicki

RaeR: They have learned to use Audacity and webcam videos for language assessment, as well as designing Quia assessments for reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary.

KarlaT: Next they are patient, but don't talk down to me just because I have less experience

MaryFT: wow Rae!

VickiGst10: For most people, Gradequick is very intuitive, so I get them to sit down and get started and they find out how easy it is to use. Confidence comes quickly.

MaryFT: ok...I really like what Karla said about being available

KarlaT: Rae, what grade level are you using Audacity and webcam to assess?

RaeR: Learning how it is it is the key

MaryFT: I have found that fitting my schedule to my mentee's needs is a good way of gaining their confidence

MaryFT: If I say I will be there then I am

RaeR: All of our students are pre-academic for the university

RaeR: It could be used for very young children however

MaryFT: it helps them to trust me and trust is essential when you are asking people to try new things

RaeR: I am sorry for my many typos--must be the time. I got up at 4:00 am for the arts discussion and then wandered into this one

BjB . o O (the same qualities are needed for helpdesk volunteers in Tapped In)

KarlaT: Like Vicki touched on - I think that confidence is a key factor as well.

BjB wondered what time it was for Rae...yikes!

MaryFT: Vicki finds that hands-on sessions are key to developing confidence with new technology tools

VickiGst10: Rae, I wondered about the time. My daughter spent a year in Cairo and we never talked in the evening like this. It is 8:20 my time.

RaeR: Almost 5:30 am here now

MaryFT: Rae...have you followed up with your mentees to see how many of them continue to use the tools?

RaeR: yes, we just were talking about that yesterday

RaeR: Most of them have used audacity

RaeR: one has used the webcam and others are interested so we reviewed a short video I had just made and how to teach students how to do that

MaryFT: I really like that idea btw!

RaeR: They like Quia because it is so simple, they also like puzzlemaker.com

MaryFT: so you are doing targeted reviews to support your mentees

MaryFT: that's good

MaryFT: Vicki...I assume that GradeQuick is mandated but do you find that some teachers stop using it or don't really get started?

MaryFT: Karla, you mentioned that you are "holding your own" with technology in your school

MaryFT: are any of your mentors interested in learning about what you know?

KarlaT: Not really, they just really love that I have some technology skills and I'm not afraid to use them

VickiGst10: As time goes on, there are fewer holdouts. It is not mandated.

MaryFT: I ask this question because I am interested in the give-take inherent in mentor-mentee relationships

ChangK joined the room.

HeatherBu joined the room.

MaryFT: that you, Karla, could go in as the mentee but could also teach your mentors something new

MaryFT: welcome Chang and Heather

RaeR: The give take is key

KarlaT: If they like something, they ask me to reproduce it for them.

MaryFT: okay...but is there opportunity for you to share your skills with them?

KarlaT: No, there really has not been that opportunity.

KarlaT: There's always soooo much to do and soooo little time to get it done!

MaryFT: that would be the optimal situation I think...that both parties could learn from each other

RaeR: Mentors are losing out when they don't also learn from their tutees

MaryFT nods

MaryFT: I agree Rae

MaryFT: I learn something new in every classroom I visit

RaeR: agree- I learn a lot from my students

DavidWe wishes that were true for most teachers in most schools

VickiGst10: At our last continuing ed day, we had 3 of our first year teachers present strategies they use. I think most people felt they had some great ideas.

KarlaT: What type strategies did they share?

HeatherBu: I know I'm just jumping in here, but isn't one of the definitions of a good teacher being a life-long learner?

MaryFT: wow! what a great opportunity for everyone

RaeR: What a great confidence builder

MaryFT: I think so Heather!

MaryFT: Please feel free to jump in at any time

RaeR: Heather--could you come and tell that to one of my teachers --please

VickiGst10: well the English teacher shared a vocabulary game that involved fly swatters to be used by jr high students.

DavidWe . o O (Hot phrase: "life-long learner)

MaryFT: we are discussing our experiences with mentoring relationships...being the mentee or the mentor

HeatherBu: Wish I could, Rae

KarlaT: Hey - my kindergarteners played a sight word game using fly swatters last week. They loved it!

MaryFT: we're exploring what strategies work in establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships

VickiGst10: It was probably the same idea and the 9th grade students love it too.

RaeR: I think not feeling that they HAVE to do it is one, but that what is being taught is one option

MaryFT: so...once you've established a mentoring relationship, how do you maintain and sustain it?

MaryFT: giving several options and letting the mentee choose what best fits their style and classroom

HeatherBu: It needs constant nurturing, and time from admin for just that

MaryFT: I like that Rae

MaryFT: ah! time from admin or, simply, time

MaryFT: what kind of time commitment do you see in mentoring relationships?

RaeR: being acquainted with your mentors immediate needs making learning easier

HeatherBu: The days are so full for new and experienced teachers, that there must be an opportunity to reflect

MaryFT: do you do a formal needs assessment to determine that Rae?

HeatherBu: we need to be able to reflect to each other, mentor and mentee

MaryFT: excellent Heather!

RaeR: I talk with them weekly about what is happening that week in their classes in our faculty meetings and we brainstorm other ways it can be done

HeatherBu: observations on both parts, then graceful dialogue between peers...

VickiGst10: Informal mentoring relationships develop by proximity.

RaeR: we all share in how to integrate technology into the classrooms

DavidWe . o O (on the Internet, no one knows you are in the Persian Gulf?)

KarlaT: I like that phrase - "graceful dialogue."

MaryFT: do you talk with them face-to-face Rae or via another method?

MaryFT: me too Karla

ChangK: I from Taiwan, what different from mentor and mentee?

RaeR: f to f

MaryFT: mentor: one who guides the mentoring relationship

DavidWe . o O (older teacher == mentor; younger teacher == mentee - usually)

MaryFT: mentee: the person who is receiving the mentoring

MaryFT: not necessarily David!

DavidWe . o O ("usually")

DavidWe . o O (more experienced/less experienced)

HeatherBu: Whoops, David, how about experienced versus new to the systems

ChangK: that is a interesting discussion.

RaeR: David--I don't know about that younger/older distinction!

DavidWe surrenders

HeatherBu grin

DavidWe . o O (more experienced == mentor; less experienced == mentee)

MaryFT: however, we've already talked about the opportunity for mentor/mentee relationships to change to give and take

MaryFT: on the part of both participants

KarlaT: Yeah - my mentor is about 18 years younger than me - but definitely more experienced in teaching.

DavidWe mops his fevered brow

KarlaT: I have other....life experiences.

MaryFT: the mentor needs to be open to learning about and from the mentee

HeatherBu nods

MaryFT smiles at David

HeatherBu: Exactly!

MaryFT: which is where Heather and Rae's reflection components come in

DavidWe: My understanding is that the "average" public school teacher stays in teaching for 5 years

HeatherBu: Rae, which side are you on, -or/ee

DavidWe . o O (both)

RaeR: Both

MaryFT: besides f2f, what other systems allow mentors and mentees to reflect on their practice and share that with each other?

DavidWe: Tapped In

MaryFT: Yay David...gold star!

RaeR: I just taught a group of students about using power point for an arts presentation. They did a great job., but afterwards I asked 2 of the to teach me some new tricks that they had taught themselves.

KarlaT: Awesome!

HeatherBu: Great!

MaryFT: Tapped In is a wonderful tool that allows mentors and mentees to communicate and reflect

MaryFT: that is a wonderful example of the give/take Rae

MaryFT: were your mentees comfortable with that change in roles?

RaeR: thrilled

KarlaT: I would be totally flattered.

MaryFT: that's why I'd really like to see you have that opportunity Karla

ChangK: In Taiwan, every grade has a leader who always an experience teacher to be. he/she can teach us many skills.

MaryFT: I happen to know that you have lots to share!

MaryFT: one topic I skipped...what about training for mentors

HeatherBu: A must! with proper modeling

MaryFT: this is related to Chang's statement

RaeR: this is often skipped as assumptions are made about what they know

MaryFT: we have a similar system in Texas...all of our student teachers are paired with experienced teachers

MaryFT: but sometimes these teachers are not mentors

RaeR: They need consistent training

HeatherBu: Nothing worse than being handed a booklet, told a new name, and sent out into the cold

KarlaT: Well, especially technology-wise.

MaryFT: yes...I think it is often assumed that people know innately how to be mentors

KarlaT: The new teachers tend to know much more technology than the experienced teachers.

HeatherBu nods vigorously

VickiGst10: In WV there is mentor training that lasts a few days. Then once a pairing has been made, the mentor/mentee go to a 2 day training together.

RaeR: that can scare some of the "older" teachers

MaryFT: that's lovely Vicki...the opportunity to meet and learn together from the first must be valuable

KarlaT: If the experienced teacher would embrace the new knowledge, it would be a win-win situation.

MaryFT: exactly Karla

HeatherBu: We're back to the time issue, though...

RaeR: I like the idea of them going to the training together

MaryFT: And we're about to run short on time ourselves...

RaeR: it also shows that both are equally valued

MaryFT: but...someone once told me that you can't ever make more time

MaryFT: just change the way you use it

MaryFT: yes Rae...it definitely communicates that

HeatherBu: Thanks. Gotta run, my self, and get back to grading.

MaryFT nods to Heather...thanks for all of your contributions!

HeatherBu left the room.

RaeR: Thanks, will this group be meeting again?

MaryFT: okay...last minute thoughts on the mentor/mentee relationship?

MaryFT: yes...on a monthly basis Rae

MaryFT: same bat time, same bat channel

BjB: Teaching Teachers meets on the first Thursday of each month

BjB . o O (April 6)

RaeR: thanks--it will be on the tapped in schedule?

DavidWe nods yes

MaryFT: I am going to run to the next session now

RaeR: bye

MaryFT: thanks, everyone, for joining in

KarlaT waves goodbye

DavidWe: Thanks, Mary

MaryFT: take care until next time!

VickiGst10: it was interesting. Thanks Mary. Bye!