

**Title of Session:** Mentoring Teachers

**Moderator:** Mary Thompson

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Room: Teaching Teachers Group

**MaryFT:** I'm Mary Thompson from the University of Houston. I teach preservice teachers in both face to face and online settings

**MaryFT:** I also teach a course on mentoring for our Master Technology Teacher certification program

**JasonB:** ok, my name is Jason. I am a physical education health education teacher, I have my masters in educational leadership

**BJB2:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania, and the Hurricane Central Mini Expo is my baby

**JasonB:** I am working on my second masters degree

**BJB2:** in what, Jason?

**JasonB:** Curriculum and Instruction

**MaryFT:** do you have a content area focus?

**JasonB:** I am located in West Virginia and I coach college football at the NCAA Division II level

**MaryFT:** wow!

**JasonB:** PE Health as an Undergrad, Ed Leadership with my masters

**MaryFT:** so you have lots of experience mentoring/coaching players!

**MaryFT:** so I thought tonight's discussion could be twofold...

**BJB2** listens to Mary's twofold plan

**MaryFT:** ...first, to look at a neat online resource that focuses on mentoring

**MaryFT:** I hope to bring in a new source every month

**MaryFT:** ...and then to discuss the potential of eMentoring

**MaryFT:** this is in response to the Hurricane mini-expo

**BJB2:** sounds great, Mary. Is this going to be part of the Teaching Teachers discussions?

**MaryFT:** I've been thinking that many teachers in these areas may not have the mentoring resources they need for several years

**MaryFT:** not to mention supplies, facilities, etc.

**MaryFT:** and there may be room for eMentoring through free systems like Tapped In to help there

**BJB2** agrees

**MaryFT** waits for opinions/thoughts

**JasonB:** do all states have mentoring programs for new teachers once they are hired?

**DavidWe** likes any use of Tapped In for mentoring

**MaryFT:** it's really on a school by school basis Jason

**MaryFT:** and the quality of the mentoring programs is highly varied

**JasonB:** my state requires every new teacher to go thru a series of meetings and assigns them a mentor in the school

**BJB2:** this ties in with the Certificates of Participation that we're trying to develop. I suggested that Dianne Allen contact you, Mary, about working with her on that so teachers can earn continuing ed credits through participation in TI

**BJB2:** same in PA, Jason

**JasonB:** WV requires that every new teacher has this, every district

**MaryFT:** in past discussions we have talked about the fact that mentors must be trained to be mentors

**JasonB:** right, and they must want to do it

**MaryFT** nods

**JasonB:** many here get a small stipend to be a mentor but most are not into it

**MaryFT:** can't be just because they get an extra \$500 stipend

**JasonB:** they beg every year for people to vol.

**MaryFT:** I supposedly had a mentor when I was a first year teacher...I didn't see her until the last day of school

**MaryFT:** and that was only to sign her paperwork

**JasonB:** I saw mine twice

**JasonB:** same reason here

**MaryFT:** so "mentoring programs" vary widely

**JasonB:** here the mentors get paid 300 a semester

**MaryFT:** and the commitment to mentoring and coaching must be fostered

**JasonB:** agreed

**MaryFT:** by the administration, principal, and the system itself

**MaryFT:** if a teacher is already overworked and stressed then asking him/her to be a mentor is seen as an extra burden

**MaryFT:** many of my student teachers get this feeling when they are placed in a cooperating teacher's classroom

**DavidWe . o O** ( like hall monitor duty )

**MaryFT:** exactly

**MaryFT:** not only do they feel like guests...they feel like 3 day old fish

**JasonB:** that fresh huh, lol

**MaryFT:** so...the idea of online resources to help with teachers understand the role of mentoring

**MaryFT:** and to help administrators understand what it takes to instill a mentoring spirit are essential

**MaryFT:** I spent time today collecting links from Edutopia on mentoring

**MaryFT:** mostly articles but there's one really nice video that you may want to watch

**MaryFT:** it's about a different sort of mentoring...between colleagues at the same school

**MaryFT:** but what is really neat is the amount of support the teachers receive from the principal

**JasonB:** ok, my first question, how do you keep the information that is being spread to the new teachers as accurate as possible and as relevant. Being an open forum, the conversation can go any where and the information is all biased in some form or fashion

**MaryFT:** I think the mentors need to be mentored also...

**MaryFT:** they need to receive training so that they know what the program is and what to say and do in response to situations

**JasonB:** how is this accomplished? who pays for their training?

**MaryFT:** mentoring shouldn't be just about giving, giving...mentors must get something back from the relationship

**MaryFT:** reciprocity

**JasonB:** where do these individuals come from? so that they are reliable to a school system that might be 100's of miles away

**MaryFT:** eventually the mentor and mentee may engage in a give and take (that's the goal) but until then...

**MaryFT:** ok...as far as eMentoring?

**JasonB:** yes

**MaryFT:** well...here's one resource I found that attempts to answer that question

**JasonB:** I see this as being a way for a school district to save on money eventually

**MaryFT:** if you look in the Links section on our mentoring page you will see a site called Mighty Mentors

**JasonB:** yes

**MaryFT:** <http://www.teaching.com/mentors/>

**JasonB:** ok

**MaryFT:** It's a free service run by teaching.com

**MaryFT:** it attempts to match mentor and mentee teachers via email

**JasonB:** ok

**MaryFT:** a mentor teacher in one area can also be a mentee in another

**JasonB:** if you were an administrator of a school district would you feel comfortable using this system ?

**MaryFT:** if you read the info under Why Mentor? and How it Works you will get a good overview of the set up

**JasonB:** you being a superintendent and every one of your new teachers were going to go thru it

**JasonB:** just curious, seems like a great idea

**JasonB:** I just know the questions some people not used to the idea of e learning would ask

**MaryFT:** I'm not sure I would launch it on a broad scale until I had done some pilot groups first

**MaryFT:** certainly

**JasonB:** k

**JasonB:** did no mean to get you off subject

**MaryFT:** so start with 4-5 new teachers and then expand each semester

**MaryFT:** not off topic at all!

**MaryFT:** good questions...I like the ed leadership twist to things

**MaryFT:** but this is a resource that I would suggest to some of my beginning teachers who are struggling

**MaryFT:** of course, all of my preservice teachers use Tapped In

**JasonB:** I just see a red flag going up where people not employed by me are telling my employees how to do things

**MaryFT:** which has a similar focus

**JasonB:** I am a control freak though

**JasonB:** lol

**JasonB:** yeah, I could see it really helping a new teacher

**MaryFT:** but mentoring is not just about telling people how to do things...in many cases a mentor is just someone who listens

**MaryFT:** and gives emotional support

**JasonB:** k

**MaryFT:** as an ed leader you will be dealing with the enormous attrition rate that we see with new teachers

**MaryFT:** what's the most recent stat on new teachers' longevity in the classroom?

**JeffC:** half quit after five years

**BJB2:** I think David said 5 years?

**JasonB:** yeah, I have seen many instances where a mentor could have helped, did not and the new teacher felt alone

**BJB2** . o O ( scary )

**JasonB:** wow, scary huh

**JasonB:** I am in year four

**MaryFT:** it's CRAZY!

**JeffC:** quitting Jason?

**JasonB:** me

**MaryFT:** and that stat does not take into account the number of preservice teachers that do not enter the classroom at all

**JasonB:** no, I love teaching

**MaryFT:** I have seen it happen

**JasonB:** yeah, I know a lot of those

**MaryFT:** so...my point is that something is missing

**JasonB:** lol, I believe that is called financial reward, lol

**JeffC:** my guess is that it's not the lack of mentoring (and support in general) that is the overriding reason why teachers leave... although I can see that as an issue.

**MaryFT:** aha...but so many teachers tell you that they do not enter teaching for financial gain

**MaryFT:** they know those stats when they start their coursework

**JeffC:** i think it's all the BS that they face, NCLB standards, high stakes testing, focus on assessment, all of which leads to student burnout, which in return leads to teacher burnout.

**MaryFT** nods

**JeffC:** if students were motivated and enthused about learning, then teachers would be as well... and vice versa.

**JasonB:** and Mother Theresa was only doing what she did to help others, any psychologist tells you that we do things because we are avoiding pain or gaining pleasure

**MaryFT:** but couldn't finding support from each other help teachers (new and old) wade through some of that Jeff?

**JasonB:** teachers get too much pain from lack of financial rewards and this causes them to move on

**JeffC:** yes... it may help, but I don't think that support from peers will be enough to sustain a career.

**MaryFT:** call me an idealist but it would have helped me

**JeffC** nods

**JasonB:** I think it does help a lot

**MaryFT:** I looked around and could find no one that shared my outlook, values, and general "take" on education

**JasonB:** I agree 100 %

**MaryFT:** and it made me sooooo tired

**JasonB:** its hard being new

**JasonB:** especially when you are younger than anyone around you

**JeffC:** that's what the net is for.

**JasonB:** they all have different values and look down upon yours

**MaryFT:** when I found a teaching partner and we understood one another it was like a ray of sunshine

**MaryFT:** I was lucky to teach with her for two years

**JasonB:** I agree that it is a must have, I just don't think that it's the biggest reason why teachers quit

**JasonB:** but it needs to be in place

**MaryFT** nods

**MaryFT:** it's one factor

**JasonB:** agreed

**MaryFT:** understanding your own teaching philosophy is in there too

**MaryFT:** too many of my students take the first job offered to them

**JeffC:** understanding is one thing, being able to implement is another.

**JeffC:** I think that it's the difference between the two which is extremely frustrating in the profession.

**MaryFT:** even though they have told me that the school does not share their teaching ideals

**JeffC:** and that frustration leads to burnout and attrition.

**JasonB:** you know, this is off topic, but I can remember my first year being scared to talk to parents in fear that I was doing something wrong

**JeffC:** makes sense to me Jason

**JasonB:** it was not until I talked to an experienced teacher that I was realized that I was not

**JeffC:** and I don't think it's off topic either.

**MaryFT:** nope...to bring it back to mentoring...wouldn't it have been great to have someone to ask?

**JasonB:** with out a doubt

**MaryFT:** Jeff...you said "understanding is one thing, being able to implement is another"

**JeffC:** Mary... what is your take on face to face vs. online mentoring?

**MaryFT:** I think that mentoring addresses this

**JeffC:** right... there is a difference

**MaryFT:** depends on the student

**MaryFT:** depends on the mentor

**JeffC:** modern theory emphasizes constructivist approach... but when you get to the classroom it often drifts back to atavistic didacticism.

**MaryFT:** I'd rather have a very good eMentor

**JasonB:** face to face is better for me. I can't stand not seeing a face and being able to see body language and hearing voice inflection

**MaryFT:** than a bored f2f one

**MaryFT:** ah soo! what about Skype?

**JasonB:** I want to ask you all to conference call, lol

**JasonB:** skype?

**MaryFT:** I know a group of teachers who use Skype to do their planning

**JeffC:** well... if you want voice... gotta have skype

**JasonB:** never heard of it

**MaryFT:** it is a free online tool for conference calling

**JeffC:** VOIP

**JeffC:** Voice Over Internet Protocol

**MaryFT:** can handle up to 5 connections

**JasonB:** very cool

**BJB2** smiles. Looks like you need to provide a variety of platforms for mentoring to be able to reach all the needs of the individuals

**MaryFT:** very true

**JeffC:** yup

**JeffC:** not to mention participation

**MaryFT:** leverage (I HATE that word) the tools that are out there

**JasonB:** just as their are multiple learners in the class room

**MaryFT:** there are all different kinds of teachers

**MaryFT:** and they will respond to different styles of mentoring

**MaryFT:** wow...wouldn't it be neat to study the relationship between learning styles and mentor/mentee styles

**JasonB:** would be interesting

**MaryFT:** Jeff...have you used the video feature in Skype?

**JasonB:** I have had online courses

**MaryFT:** true online courses or web-based correspondence courses?

**JasonB:** they taught it just like I was in the classroom, just gave me the lecture on a e mail, I hated that

**JasonB:** it was WEB CT program

**JeffC:** I haven't used video in skype... used it in YIM and other platforms though... why?

**JasonB:** Salem Wired

**MaryFT:** wanted to know how many vid connections it could sustain

**JeffC:** good question Mary... I don't know the answer though.

**MaryFT:** Web CT is a platform...it does not equate to good course delivery

**MaryFT:** at the very least, your instructor should have audio-recorded their lectures

**JasonB:** no such thing

**MaryFT:** that's lack of training for you

**MaryFT:** and, btw, I HATE the word training too

**MaryFT:** too many people think they are teaching online

**JasonB:** well, this was very informative, I have enjoyed it very much. I will tell all of the teachers that are on my staff now about this, especially the new one

**MaryFT:** I'm glad you joined us Jason

**JasonB:** yeah, I will be around more often

**MaryFT:** that great

**MaryFT:** hopefully you'll meet more of our group in other sessions

**JasonB:** hope so

**BJB2:** The next Teaching Teachers discussion is on April 6

**BJB2:** thanks, Mary

**MaryFT:** we'll probably look at some of these same resources

**MaryFT:** plus new ones

**MaryFT:** I'm going to spend some more time with Mighty Mentors and Skype

**MaryFT:** any suggestions for next meeting?

**JasonB:** have fun

**MaryFT:** will do

**JasonB:** talk about recruiting funding to make e mentoring possible and over come the obstacles after naming them

**MaryFT:** good idea!