

Mentoring Practices

Elementary Teacher Preparation Program

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Teacher Education

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Mentoring Practices

People are mentors, not because they think they have so much to give or teach, but because they know they have so much to learn.

P. David Pearson

The ideas discussed in *Mentoring Practices* are a collection of ideas developed by collaborating teachers, program personnel, and those offered in the research literature on mentoring. They are designed to guide new Mentor Teachers (MTs) in their work with interns and to provide stimulus for discussion among experienced mentors regarding the deepening and improvement of their own mentoring practices. All participants involved in the internship--MTs, interns, field instructors, course instructors, program coordinator, Program Director--are invited to work with and further develop the ideas presented below.

The Mentor Teacher as Teacher Educator and Co-Learner

Any mentor teacher who has worked with interns will quickly acknowledge that it is complex and demanding work, and that, like all teaching, there is always more to learn about carrying out the mentoring role. That is because mentors are *teacher educators* who must provide appropriate guidance and support for a novice teacher whose professional practice is still developing.

Learning about the intern's learning needs. An intern does not arrive in the MT's classroom in the fall a "proficient" teacher. Rather, an intern comes with basic knowledge of how classrooms operate and a collection of ideas about planning, teaching and assessment that s/he has had a limited number of opportunities to try out. The internship is the time designated in MSU's Teacher Preparation Program for the novice to try out, with support, the ideas studied in the program, and to participate in planned experiences that will help him/her develop increasing expertise in a variety of areas. By the internship year, an intern has had little exposure to a teacher's responsibilities outside the classroom, or how to make use of the material and human resources available in a typical school building. The internship year is the time to learn about and take part in the range of responsibilities required of a classroom teacher. Complicating matters, each intern brings unique strengths and weaknesses to the classroom, and therefore support that was helpful to one intern in the past may not be appropriate for supporting another intern's learning. The internship year is a time for the intern to receive support that is designed and planned specifically to support his/her ongoing development across the year.

Mentoring as a form of teaching. When mentors view themselves as *teacher educators*, they view their work with a novice teacher as a *form of teaching* that includes the following characteristics:

- model being a *learning* professional
- think aloud about own practice, including what did not go well
- explain why, what, how of own practice
- ask questions of intern, rather than only expecting your intern to question you
- give yourself permission to not know
- encourage your intern to develop own practice and make own decisions
 - be explicit about practice, yet communicate the idea that the intern is not expected to copy or imitate the MT
- communicate that everyone contributes to learning to teach
- keep children as learners at the forefront; they are the primary responsibility for both MT and intern

Mentoring as co-learning. Mentor teachers understand that they have much to learn across their careers as mentors. When mentor teachers view themselves as *teachers of another adult*, they consider themselves *co-learners*:

- voice mistakes, honesty, open-mindedness
- show interest in learning from the intern's expertise; the intern is a resource
- the MT is not "all knowing" and should not be expected to be
- knowledge is developed through collaboration

Core mentoring practices. Research has shown that the practices in which effective mentors engage are varied and complex and they are adaptable to the novice's learning needs. The following ideas are drawn from Sharon Feiman-Nemser's article (Feiman-Nemser, S. [2001]. Helping novices learn to teach: Lessons from an exemplary support teacher. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52, 17-30). They serve as a set of core mentoring practices from which to draw. As in any teaching and learning relationship, these practices are based on the assumption that both mentor (collaborating teacher) and novice (intern) are *active* participants. Many of these ideas will be discussed in greater depth throughout the *Mentoring Practices* section of this document.

Core Mentoring Practices	The Mentor's Responsibility	The Intern's Responsibility
Finding openings for conversation	The mentor teacher finds topics to talk about that are important to the novice (intern) and that are fruitful to talk about because they bring up basic issues that teachers need to think about carefully and thoroughly.	The novice notices these invitations to conversation; assumes that the mentor might be trying to raise questions, issues, and options that the intern has not thought about; and makes note of key issues raised.
Framing Problems	The mentor helps the novice to decide what to treat as relevant in a situation--in other words, how to frame a problem. This helps the novice to make situations manageable by setting some boundaries on what is paid attention; it also helps the novice to see that teachers have choices in the way they define "problems," and therefore have choices about how to find potential "solutions."	The intern keeps in mind that the MT's framing of the situation can be both different from the intern's and useful to the intern. The intern pays attention to the MT's reasoning behind the framing of the problem, and discusses alternative frames with the MT.
Probing Novices' Thinking	The mentor finds out how the novice is thinking about a situation by asking him/her to elaborate on an initial statement or explanation, and may also extend the novice's thinking by asking the intern to think about an area that was not initially considered.	The novice responds by trying to be frank and clear about her or his thinking; by reporting incomplete, tentative, and potentially invalid rationales without worrying about being "right" or "wrong"; and by listening for the hints that sometimes come in questions.
Noticing Signs of Growth	The mentor acknowledges and compliments the novice on specific aspects of her/his teaching, explicitly talking about what the novice did and can do.	The novice listens carefully for the <i>content</i> of the compliment, because the mentor may be talking about a different part or aspect of the performance than the novice thought was important.
Focusing on the Kids	The mentor helps the novice to focus attention on students' thinking and sense making in addition to more formal assessments, and to use information about students' thinking as a source of feedback on teaching, a way to keep track of children's learning, and a source of ideas for curriculum development.	The novice accepts that s/he must learn to put an interest in students' learning before a concern for her or his own performance in the classroom, or his or her own interests, and tries to reason from the former to the latter. The novice uses information about children to inform ongoing instruction.
Reinforcing an Understanding of Theory	The mentor connects specific examples of children's sense-making to research and theory, so as to help novices develop broad perspectives for looking at and thinking about their work.	The intern recognizes the mentor's cue to connect a given case with relevant research and theory, and starts to think actively about potential connections with research and theory that the intern has studied.

(Cont.)

Core Mentoring Practices	The Mentor's Responsibility	The Intern's Responsibility
Giving Living Examples of One Person's Way of Teaching	The mentor models a set of teaching practices, thinking aloud so the novice can both observe the mentor's actions and understand how the mentor thinks about those actions in situations. This set of practices is viewed and discussed as one of many possibilities for developing a practice that is consistent with the program standards.	The novice listens carefully to the mentor's think-aloud, in order to see and hear the part or aspect of practice that the mentor is trying to show. The novice also may need the discipline of listening and observing as distinct from judging. The novice takes responsibility for deciding when and how to try to emulate the MT's particular set of teaching practices.
Modeling Wondering About Teaching	The mentor models (thinks aloud) ways of thinking about teaching in specific contexts, so novices can understand the thinking behind a teacher's actions and can develop broadly useful perspectives for looking at and thinking about their work. One essential kind of thinking is wondering--acts of curiosity.	The intern recognizes that the mentor is trying to reveal the invisible mental work behind the visible work of teaching in a classroom, and seizes the opportunity to discover how someone else thinks about events in the classroom. The intern exerts curiosity.
Goal Setting	The mentor takes an active role in helping the novice to articulate goals for growth and to assess progress in working toward those goals; the mentor offers and suggests potential areas of growth to the novice.	The intern agrees that it is important to hold goals for one's own growth, tries to set them, and involves the mentor in helping to assess growth toward the goal.
Problem Solving	The mentor joins the novice and field instructor in framing problems of teaching practice, identifying a range of potential solutions, and discussing whether problems are resolved.	The intern recognizes that situations in the classroom can be framed differently, and explores others' framing and suggested solutions in relation to his or her own.
Co-Planning and Co-Teaching	The mentor joins the novice in unit and lesson planning, and in carrying out those plans in the classroom, aims to help the novice to understand the knowledge and thinking that informs the planning, to guide the novice in using effective strategies throughout the planning and teaching process, and to show what can be shared only by teaching together in the classroom.	The intern is alert to recognize both what can be said about teaching and what can be shown by action in the classroom. The intern takes initiative to be an active participant in the co-planning and co-teaching processes, according to his/her readiness and the agreements made with the MT and field instructor.

Experienced mentors know that it takes time and effort to develop the above practices, and that talking with fellow mentors and field instructors about those practices is an important source for their own professional growth. As with all teaching situations, mentors need to be open to asking questions, stating uncertainties, and learning in and from their practice.

Communication

The internship depends heavily on talk: asking questions, giving feedback, analyzing classroom situations, setting goals, negotiating agreements, making and clarifying situation. We can accomplish much, or impede progress by the way we talk to each other. Here are some guidelines for having productive conversations throughout the year.

Effective communication requires time. Establishing and maintaining effective communication does not happen on its own.

- it requires arranging a *regular time* for communication that both parties can count on
- there should be a daily time to touch base to get the day started and clarify the day's responsibilities
- there should be a regular block of time (at least weekly) to discuss responsibilities, key events, the working relationship, and how communication is going

Using communication skills effectively. Communicating with another professional in a learning situation requires careful attention to developing and maintaining excellent communication:

- explicit talk about communication dynamics is a regular part of maintaining effective communication
- effective communication requires a commitment from both parties to purposefully work at assuring success
- good communication is based on trust
- the relationship begins by establishing how feedback will be given--both ways--to learn about needs and preferences
- feedback is not given or received as criticism
- feedback is safe and constructive
- feedback is based on an acceptance of where the intern starts and what the intern brings to the situation
- communication is two-way--the intern's feedback is accepted and valued
- both parties are direct enough to communicate what is intended
- both parties learn about one another's sensitivity
- both parties are inclined to ask key questions to begin discussions
- both parties reflect and restate ideas to check on how the message is understood
- neither party lets issues build up--issues are talked about as they occur
- either party gets help (individually or jointly) from a third party if communication is not progressing well

Breaking the ice. One or two of these at the beginning of the year may be especially helpful when one or more of the partners is quiet or reserved:

- Tell each other stories about how you decided to go into teaching. How have your ideas about teaching evolved?
- Do you have a metaphor you would use to describe teaching, such as weaving or constructing or quilting or journeying?
- What are your worst fears about teaching? Have they, or how have they, changed over time?
- How has your teaching changed since you began? What have you learned and how have you learned it? When you wanted to try something new in your classroom, how did you go about it?
- What are your interests and hobbies? Do you have a special skill or interest that you bring into the classroom?

Lots of ways to ask "why." Frequently, we will want to know "why," but "why" questions tend to feel pushy and sometimes intrusive, either to those who ask them or to those who are asked. Sensing that, we might fail to ask when we really need to. Failing to sense that, we might alarm or irritate someone when that is not our intention by asking questions such as:

- "Why did you do _____ with that student?"
- "Why did you interrupt me in front of the class?"
- "Why did you decide to deviate from your plan?"
- "Why do I have to write lesson plans when you don't?"

How can we ask these questions in a way that is more comfortable, and perhaps more informative?

- "I noticed that you (describe something that happened). How did you decide to do that right then?"
- "I thought it was interesting when you _____. Can you help me understand how you thought to do that?"

The principle: Describe something specifically and in neutral terms, then ask to be taught.

Talk about teaching. Here are some topics for discussions that are likely to be helpful to interns sometime during the year, and that might be interesting also to persons working with the interns. Notice that these topics encourage reflective thinking, a key activity to support professional growth.

- What do you know, or think you know, about the students in your class as learners? How did you learn what you know about them? Why is this knowledge important? How does your knowledge guide how you think and what you do regarding individual students? How does it guide your thinking regarding forming groups or working with the whole class?

- How do you take gender, race, class, and cultural issues into account when making teaching decisions?
- What puzzles you regarding your students? What do you want to know more about?
- What do you see as the relationships among planning, your big aims in teaching, implementation of lessons, and outcomes?
- What were you trying to accomplish in that last lesson? What was the purpose? Why is it important? How did your interactions with the students relate to the purpose? What did the students learn?
- What is the role of a schoolteacher? What responsibilities do you have regarding students' academic, social, and emotional growth, communications with parents, communication with colleagues, your own professional growth? How do these responsibilities influence how you think and act as a teacher?
- What issues, tensions, or conflicts do you experience because your obligations as a teacher may differ from your personal views? How are these issues and tensions reflected in your teaching?
- What guides or directs the curriculum you use? What decisions do you make, as the teacher, about what gets taught? What are the givens that must be taken into account? What can teachers do to enrich or modify a curriculum? What controversies about curriculum do we face in various content areas? If so, how do you deal with them?
- How would we describe the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional environment created by this and other classrooms? What opportunities exist for students to learn actively in this environment? How can the classroom be arranged to suit learning goals? What are the constraints of the environment and how can they be worked with?
- What do you know about the neighborhood and community and how do they influence the school and your teaching? How does this knowledge help you in knowing your students? In what ways do you utilize the community and community resources in your teaching practice?
- Considering the students together as a class, or community, what history has the class built together so far? How have the MT and intern participated in or contributed to building the learning community? What can they yet contribute?
- What is the intern studying in the TE 80x courses? How are those studies related to practice in this classroom and school? How are they related to issues that teachers face in their first few years of teaching?

There's a lot to talk about; make time to do so.

Co-Planning

Planning for teaching is a complex activity that does not look the same for all teachers. Some teachers write out detailed plans while others keep track mentally of many aspects of their planning. As teachers gain more experience, they may gradually begin to write less and keep more in their heads. However planning is carried out, there are key areas that all teachers need to consider in order to engage in standards-based teaching. For a detailed description of expectations for interns' planning, refer to the [Unit/Lesson Planning Guide](#).

Internship Planning

Interns are expected to:

- write unit plans for every unit that they teach during the year, and to discuss those units with their mentor teachers, and sometimes field instructors, before they teach them
- write lesson plans for every lesson that they teach during the year, and again to discuss those in advance with their MTs, and regularly with their field instructors.

Reasons for making written plans. Interns might wonder why they are expected to write unit and lesson plans. In a student's experience with teachers, it is not obvious that a teacher's day in the classroom includes planning. Therefore, it might be difficult for some interns to regard planning as being part of a teacher's work. A given intern might see that his/her mentor teacher does not commit much of his/her own plans to writing (or perhaps does not commit as much to writing as s/he did earlier in her career). Thus, interns may wonder why they are expected to plan thoroughly and extensively--on paper.

It is important to plan instruction carefully and to evaluate and reflect upon instruction thoroughly. Good planning is a key to good teaching and student learning. One major benefit of careful planning and thorough reflection is that it helps to build good teaching habits, and to give the teacher a measure of control over those habits, thus increasing the teacher's capacity to serve her or his students. Writing plans as an intern helps to form mental habits that are essential to being prepared for teaching. Developing these habits as an intern and beginning teacher will mean less actual writing in the future. Writing out plans also helps novices who are not used to thinking of all the details necessary to carrying out a successful lesson be thorough about all aspects that require attention. Writing plans out is a form of "mental rehearsal" that allows a beginning teacher to "walk through" the various details of the plan, review it for areas that need further work, and serves as an important reminder about what needs to be prepared ahead of time so the lesson will go smoothly. With the basics worked out well in advance, mental energy to address the unforeseen, on-the-spot events that so often arise in teaching is then available!

During the internship year, an intern's unit and lesson plans also serve to inform the collaborating teacher, field instructor, and course instructor about the intern's intentions,

so that they can better help the intern to act on those intentions--or to reconsider them. Access to interns' thinking about unit and lesson plans is a key way MTs, field instructors and course instructors identify interns' strengths and problem areas and help interns further develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to meet the [Teacher Preparation Program Standards](#).

Finally, recall that the collaborating teacher is the teacher of record for the class, the one who will be held responsible for it. Therefore, the CT needs and deserves to be informed, in advance and in some detail, of what is going to be done with that class, and why. That information can be provided efficiently in unit and lesson plans.

How Mentors Engage in Co-Planning with Interns

Co-planning is a central activity throughout the internship that requires considerable commitment and energy for both the MT and intern. Some MTs have experience with co-planning because they have worked in a team teaching situation, while others have always planned on their own. As those who have experience in this area already know, learning to co-plan is complex, and it must be done in ways that suit the *practical needs of the mentor*, the *learning needs of the children* in the classroom, and the *professional learning needs of interns*.

Why is co-planning important? When mentors and interns co-plan, they have access to one another's thinking in ways that are very difficult to achieve otherwise. What may seem obvious or even "second nature" to an experienced teacher is not always evident or clear to a novice. MTs model their thinking about the range of planning decisions (outlined in [Unit/Lesson Planning Guide](#)) and make explicit how their decisions are applicable to the particular school, classroom, and children for whom the plans are being constructed. Interns make explicit their thinking and questions, which enables MTs to know which ideas need further elaboration, and in which areas interns need further support. These interactions cannot take place in the same depth if MTs merely hand interns copies of past units they have taught, or interns give a copy of a unit plan to their MT after all their thinking and questions have occurred as they planned alone.

Getting started with co-planning. During the early weeks of school, "co-planning" will likely consist mainly of the MT telling the intern about his or her plans, and how things are typically done. That is because the MT has considerable investment in establishing the classroom rules and routines, and getting the year's curriculum underway successfully. It is also because novices need to hear and learn about, and then see the results of, how to get a school year started. The MT, therefore, "narrates" what is happening, and takes the time to explain not only *how* things are done, but *why*.

The MT and intern decide together how much detail is written down regarding planning when the MT takes the lead during the early weeks; however, they need to

keep in mind that the *intern* will be expected to write out detailed plans for any instruction for which s/he takes the lead. The MT increases the intern's guided participation in planning by delegating parts of the planning task (e.g., asking the intern to prepare a handout or compose a set of instructions) or by asking the intern to join the MT in brainstorming some options for given lessons or finding resources for lessons. Involving the intern in these ways can be highly productive for the intern, both because the co-planning lets the intern see how an experienced teacher thinks while planning, and because the intern can contribute to parts of the planning task with support. Note that these co-planning events require *interaction between the mentor and intern*, not just an exchange of written documents.

MTs and interns should set aside blocks of time to work interactively to talk through the ideas in the planning guide as the intern takes on more responsibility for developing written plans. Starting with these small beginnings, interns should be expected to write their plans thoroughly and specifically (using the [Unit/Lesson Planning Guide](#)) and to discuss the plans with their MTs (and at scheduled times with their field instructors) before they teach. During TE 501 seminars, interns will also be discussing their development of lesson plans for regular routines with their field instructor and colleagues.

Co-planning throughout the year with support from course work. With each subject area and topic undertaken across the school year, interns will be confronted with new issues, questions, and challenges in their planning. During fall semester, the two subject areas that interns will focus on in greatest detail are mathematics and literacy, the same subject areas for which interns will get support in planning through TE 801 and TE 802. A successful unit that is co-planned during the fall months lays essential groundwork for later planning, but does not necessarily anticipate or answer questions that will arise later in the year about a different subject matter, topic, about resources available, or about what is developmentally appropriate for children at a different time of year. Therefore, while the responsibility for who takes the lead in planning will vary across the year (see the phases outlined in the *Mentoring Guide* section of the [Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship](#)), and the degree of conversation and explanation may change, *co-planning should remain a core activity throughout the internship year*. The approach to co-planning for social studies and science in spring semester, supported by TE 803 and TE 804, may look different based on the intern's learning needs by that point in the year, but it should still entail regular, ongoing conversation between the MT and intern.

The topics outlined in the [Unit/Lesson Planning Guide](#) will guide co-planning sessions for math and literacy in the fall months, and for all four subject matters as the year progresses. Some areas of the planning guide will be targeted in more or less detail, depending on the time of year, resources available, classroom management issues that arise, and children's learning needs. Variations will also occur in relation to the intern's strengths and weaknesses and areas needing further support.

In-depth planning can be thought of as an *inquiry process* where mentors and their interns ask questions and explore answers together. They share their thinking and their uncertainties, since there are many aspects of teaching and learning that there is much to learn about. The following are some areas that are likely to be addressed across co-planning sessions.

Goal setting: Interns' prior course work has emphasized national and state content standards that provide an overall framework for making decisions about content and skills to be taught in each subject matter area. Mentors and interns talk about how the particular planning decisions they are making fit within the "big picture" at multiple levels: national and state standards; the district curriculum; the school year. The rationale for making particular decisions is discussed. They also talk about the background knowledge needed to plan effectively in each subject matter area. Understandably, interns will not be familiar with all content that is to be taught at their particular grade level and will therefore need guidance and support in locating and using appropriate resources to enhance their knowledge for planning.

Gathering information about students: Interns will have limited experience, if any, in working with children at the grade level they are placed for their internship. Therefore, they need to have lots of conversations about what kinds of information, materials, activities and assessments are appropriate for children at that grade level. Interns need support in becoming acquainted with students' prior knowledge and experiences, their language and reasoning processes, their attitudes, their unique learning needs, and pre-assessment tools that can help them learn about those areas. They need guidance in maintaining a balance between focusing on children's learning and their selection of teaching strategies and activities.

Appraisal of resources, tasks and activities: Interns come to the classroom with lots of ideas about resources, activities and tasks that they have been collecting throughout their prior course work. They may need help in making decisions about which of those are appropriate for the grade level for which they are now planning, and the curriculum requirements in their school. Conversations about appropriateness will also include which resources, tasks and activities are of high quality, which are most helpful in reaching instructional goals, and how they can be adapted or revised to meet the unique learning needs of all children. The social skills needed to carry out activities and tasks should be considered, along with issues related to classroom management. Sequencing and pacing of activities and assignments is another area where interns need guidance and support.

Coherence across the planning process. Novices enter the internship with deeply held ideas about what type of teacher they want to become and the type of learning community they hope to foster. The internship is a key time for them to act on and refine their emerging teaching philosophy, and to talk with an experienced teacher about the extent to which their plans are consistent with their

overall vision for teaching and learning. Conversations about these issues begin with the MT talking about his/her own philosophy and how that gets translated into the classroom as co-planning begins, and gradually shift to discussions of the interns' philosophy.

Many of the issues outlined above are likely to remain invisible without *regular opportunities* for MTs and interns to plan interactively and collaboratively throughout the year. Interns will not have access to MTs' expertise and thinking, and MTs will not have ongoing access to information about interns' professional learning needs. Experienced mentors agree that although co-planning is time consuming and labor intensive, it is a core practice for fostering professional growth throughout an internship.

Providing feedback on interns' written plans. Since interns are required to write specific plans for lessons and units, reading and responding to their written plans becomes another form of "co-planning," since discussion about plans can cycle into generating ideas for further planning. Interns certainly like to hear compliments that their MT liked their plans, but they benefit more from specific feedback that lets them know which areas are strong and which areas could use more work. The [Unit/Lesson Planning Guide](#) provides a specific reference for the aspects to look for in interns' plans and the feedback that are useful to interns. It also is helpful to look across the series of lessons to consider whether, as a whole, the unit works toward teaching for understanding. The following, adapted from the *Teaching for Understanding Reflection Checklist*, by Lois Hetland, are some ideas to consider when reviewing an intern's plans:

YOU KNOW YOU ARE TEACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING WHEN:

The learning is generative:

- instruction is focused on a few central ideas/topics
- the topics are personally significant for you and the students
- activities engage students actively in thinking about, practicing and using ideas/skills
- genuine inquiry cuts across the planned activities

The understanding goals are clear and explicit:

- overarching goals or themes are explicitly stated orally and in writing
- goals for particular units are closely related to overarching goals (the "big picture")
- you and your students regularly discuss and reflect on unit-long and overarching goals to help them connect what they are doing and why they are doing it

Students are working primarily on performances of understanding

- students work actively in varied formats: pursuing projects and reflecting alone; collaborating and conferencing in small groups; interacting in whole groups
- students are thinking, and making thinking visible, in the context of carrying out activities that challenge their misconceptions, stereotypes, and prior thinking
- appropriate adaptations and accommodations are made so *all* children will be successful
- students can explain what they are doing and why

- you spend your time coaching, conferencing, leading, participating in discussions, and sometimes "telling"
- the room is filled with student work, both finished and in process
- responsibility and authority for your work is shared among you and your students

The assessment is ongoing

- students engage in cycles of drafting, reflecting, critiquing, responding to, and revising their own and others' ideas and work
- you and your students share responsibility for assessment
- everyone assesses work according to stated criteria and standards for quality, which are closely related to the understanding goals
- assessment is often conversational, spontaneous and part of ongoing classroom interaction; periodically it is more formal, recorded and planned
- self-reflection occurs frequently, in a variety of forms
- judgments about the success of a unit are made on solid evidence of student learning

Co-Teaching

Many mentors have engaged in co-teaching, sometimes called "team teaching," with a colleague during their careers. Co-teaching during an internship is done for dual purposes:

- to support meaningful learning for the children in the classroom
- to support the novice's professional learning.

Experienced mentors know that in order to meet both of these purposes successfully, co-teaching must be carefully planned and orchestrated. How it is done across the year will vary according to the needs of the children in the classroom and the needs of the intern. As MTs and interns co-plan, they should keep in mind when/how various forms of co-teaching help them work toward the dual goals of supporting children's and the intern's learning.

Choosing an appropriate form of co-teaching to meet dual goals. The following are examples of different forms of "co-teaching" that MTs and interns might find appropriate to suit different needs at different times (adapted from Marilyn Friend, 1994: Co-Teaching: Principles, Practices, and Pragmatics). As math and literacy units are co-planned during the fall months, MTs and interns will also discuss which forms of co-teaching are appropriate for the learning needs of the children and the intern. As social studies and science units are co-planned and taught during guided lead teaching in the spring, these needs may shift and different decisions may be made.

- ***One teaches, one observes students:*** This allows both teachers to learn more about students and how they are responding to a lesson and understanding the

content. Teachers decide in advance what information should be gathered and agree on a system for collecting information. Afterward, the teachers analyze the information together. Not only does this approach become a powerful form of ongoing assessment, it also helps build the intern's knowledge about students' attitudes, knowledge and skills, and provides a common base for MTs and interns to compare insights and impressions.

- ***Parallel teaching:*** The teachers are both teaching the same lesson, but they divide the class group and do so simultaneously, which decreases group size and increases the teachers' opportunities for interactions with children. Debriefing after parallel teaching enables MTs and interns to compare notes about how the lesson went, differences in results with different groups, and problems or issues that arose.
- ***One teaches, one circulates:*** One teacher maintains primary responsibility for teaching while the other circulates throughout the room providing assistance to students as needed. Debriefing can provide valuable information for the primary teacher about questions and issues that were raised by students. This approach also models for the intern how to manage more complicated strategies when they are teaching on their own, if they seek ways for volunteers to work in the classroom (or, eventually, work with an intern of their own).
- ***Center teaching:*** Teachers divide content and students; each teacher teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "center" could require that students work independently. Debriefing after center teaching expands both teachers' "experience" by hearing about how lessons went that they may have planned, but did not personally teach, and fosters conversation about children's learning needs and ideas for future centers.
- ***Alternative teaching:*** When some students fail to understand a concept or skill as it is presented, this approach allows for re-teaching to some students. One teacher works with a small group that needs re-teaching while the other provides enrichment or alternative activities to the rest of the class. This approach is a key experience for helping the intern understand how adaptations and accommodations are made for individual learners. Debriefing stimulates conversation about specific learners' progress and future directions for those learners.
- ***Team teaching:*** Both teachers deliver the same instruction together. One may model while the other one speaks, one may demonstrate while the other explains, the teachers may role play, or they may simply take turns conducting the lesson. This approach allows for each teacher to draw upon his/her unique strengths, and provides a common experience upon which to reflect, regarding the implementation of the lesson and student learning.

Conversation before, during, and after co-teaching. For all forms of co-teaching, a key feature is the conversation that surrounds it. Mentors may have specific advice to give *before teaching* to help the intern anticipate student responses, management issues, or difficulties of implementation. Some MTs find ways to talk with their interns *during the lesson* by turning to them at key times to explain why they made a particular decision, or to consult with them about how to proceed. Debriefing *following co-teaching* assures that what each person noticed about the lesson is shared and built upon for further co-planning and co-teaching. In this way, novices gain access to experienced teachers' thinking about lesson implementation and experienced teachers are able to model how they reflect upon their teaching.

Focused Observations and Debriefing

Experienced mentors know that they need to integrate their feedback to interns about their teaching across a busy school day, and that much of the "observing" that goes on gets done in the midst of both MT and intern carrying out their respective responsibilities. Therefore, much of the professional "teaching" on the part of the mentor and the "learning" on the part of the intern happens informally. Nevertheless, experienced mentors also know that it is important to take time to provide more structured support across the year to make sure that all areas of growth get attention, and to coordinate efforts to support the intern with the field and course instructors.

Thoughtful mentors make plans for supporting their intern's learning, just as they plan for supporting the learning of the children in their classroom. Just as interns learn a great deal from observing their MTs teaching, MTs learn a great deal about interns' strengths and weaknesses from observing interns teaching. Both parties get the most out of observations when they are conducted for a specific purpose that helps the observer know what to focus on among the myriad options in a busy classroom, and when they are followed by conversation that provides access to the teacher's thinking and the observer's record of events.

Selecting a focus for observations. The MT and intern will agree upon specific focused observations of the intern's teaching to be done by the MT. The MT and field instructor should also periodically discuss ways to coordinate the areas of focus each will concentrate on so that, over time, the intern receives feedback across a variety of areas. The following frameworks can be used to plan observations with the intern, to keep track of areas that have been observed, and to check to see whether all areas are addressed across the internship year. These charts should be used *flexibly* to support the professional learning needs of each intern. The list of ideas in the previous section titled "You Know You are Teaching for Understanding When..." may also be a useful way to select a focus, as well as the section on Providing Written Feedback.

Frameworks for Planning and Conducting Classroom Observations

Focus on Subject Matter Content		
Selected Focus Area(s)	Dates Observed	Feedback Provided (e.g., scripted lesson, took notes, drew diagram, checklist, created own format, oral feedback, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and objectives that seek to teach for understanding are communicated clearly. • Selection of content takes into account district and/or school curriculum guidelines, subject matter standards, student's backgrounds, learning needs and interests. • Selection of content includes key core concepts, big ideas, information, skills. • Discussions, activities and tasks represent substantive, in-depth treatment of content. • Appropriate support for skill and strategy development and opportunities for application are provided. • An appropriate range of reasoning and problem solving processes are incorporated. • Discussion, activities, and tasks allow for inquiry-oriented treatment of subject matter. • An appropriate range of resources is used to motivate and meet the learning needs of all learners. • Intern is deliberate and explicit in connecting lesson to previous lessons, goals and/or prior experiences in lesson opening. • Intern is deliberate and explicit in bringing closure to the lesson by allocating time for summarizing and connecting lesson to future lessons, real world issues, and/or goals of lesson. 		

Focus on Classroom Discourse, Interactions and Tasks		
Selected Focus Area(s)	Dates Observed	Feedback Provided (e.g., scripted lesson, took notes, drew diagram, checklist, created own format, oral feedback, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning leads to critical thinking, exploration of content, and diverse responses from a variety of students. • All students are encouraged to explain their thinking and provide evidence for claims. • All students are encouraged to ask questions. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intern listens carefully, and responds thoughtfully to all students' ideas, comments and questions. • The interns' responses to students' participation express interest and value children's thinking (e.g., "Please tell me how you figured that out." or "I wonder what would happen if you tried..." instead of relying on set phrases such as "good answer"). • Tasks, materials and participation structures (whole group, small group, pairs, individual) are well planned and organized for learning. • Tasks, materials, and participation structures (whole group, small group, pairs, individual) engage all students, stimulate their thinking, and organize their in-depth exploration of topics. • The intern adapts his/her own role to the activity (e.g., tries to figure out when to talk and when to listen during a class discussion or during group work). 		
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Focus on Assessment		
Selected Focus Area(s)	Dates Observed	Feedback Provided (e.g., scripted lesson, took notes, drew diagram, checklist, created own format, oral feedback, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and teaching are based on pre-assessment: gathering and use of information regarding what students already know, understand, and can do. • Planning and teaching are informed by ongoing assessments. Individual and group work is monitored and documented during teaching and information is used to make decisions about what to do next. • Planning and teaching are informed by authentic formal assessments. Assessment tasks (e.g., assignments, tests, discussion questions) allow and require students to demonstrate their genuine understanding, and/or appropriate use of skills and strategies (e.g., connect ideas, use ideas, solve problems, apply skills), and are focused on lesson objectives. 		

Focus on Adaptations		
Selected Focus Area(s)	Dates Observed	Feedback Provided (e.g., scripted lesson, took notes, drew diagram, checklist, created own format, oral feedback, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children are supported in participating actively in discussions and tasks, and appropriate accommodations and adaptations are planned for and/or made during the lesson as needed. • All children are treated as capable of learning, and their capacities and strengths are focused on. • Classroom interaction and communication is clear, making students feel cared for and listened to. • The intern works with students who have severe behavioral or emotional problems in an organized and professional way that helps them to develop and follow through on reasonable plans (including IEP, if applicable) to overcome their problems. 		

Focus on Classroom Management		
Selected Focus Area(s)	Dates Observed	Feedback Provided (e.g., scripted lesson, took notes, drew diagram, checklist, created own format, oral feedback, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classroom management strategies used match and support the intern's instructional goals. • The intern fosters norms for social interaction among students that promote respect and cooperation. • The intern uses multiple strategies (e.g., nonverbal cues, proximity, voice) to manage student behavior and keep students on task. • The intern deals with minor disruptive behavior such as talking inappropriately in reasonable and consistent ways that regain students' attention and keep the class moving. • Activities are organized and introduced so that students are prepared for them and can carry them out successfully. • The intern has adequately planned for procedural activities (e.g., passing out supplies, getting into groups, etc.) so management problems are kept to a minimum. • Time allotment for the lesson is appropriate for instructional goals (lessons do not routinely end too early or run over time). • Transitions from one lesson to another are organized and structured appropriately. • A variety of participation structures are used (whole group, small group, individual) that suit the lesson goals and tasks. • Students are supported in learning to work with others, as well as alone, and to participate in decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution processes. • The intern models effective communication when presenting ideas and information and asking questions, and promotes effective communication among students. 		

Debriefing. One of the most difficult but also important parts of working closely with interns is giving them frequent, honest, and useful information about their performance. Most frequently during the internship, both MTs and field instructors take on this key responsibility.

Sometimes novices are not aware of things they are doing well, things that contribute to effective lessons. Sometimes they are not aware of ways in which they work against their own purposes. They may have unconscious habits that are inappropriate or distracting. Someone who is present can give valuable feedback, particularly if the receiver is prepared to hear it and the giver is thoughtful in composing it. Some suggestions:

- Regularly make agreements in advance about *how, when and about what* feedback is to be given and received. Such agreements tend both to reduce misunderstandings about what should be happening and to prevent avoidance of the occasion for feedback. The *Frameworks for Planning and Conducting Classroom Observations* presented above can be helpful in making such agreements.
- Try to start with *description and interpretations*, as distinct from evaluation. Descriptions are limited to what was said and done. Avoid assumptions about motive or intent (why you think someone did something). By avoiding evaluative language, we avoid having the receiver react defensively (e.g., “I didn’t do that!” whether stated verbally or mentally).
- Consider whether beginning with an open-ended question would be helpful way to begin a debriefing session, so that the person being observed has an opportunity to contribute to the focus of the conversation. Try openings such as, “So what do you think is important to talk about?” or “Does it make sense to proceed with our agreed-upon focus, or were there other things that came up that you would like to talk about?”
- Try to concentrate on behavior that the receiver of the feedback can do something about. Reminding people of some short-coming that they cannot easily remedy (e.g., nervous stuttering, facial tic) tends to be frustrating and discouraging.
- Try to be specific rather than general. To be told that one is ‘dominating’ is not as useful as being told that, “In the discussion that just took place, you had 15 turns and the students had 4 turns to speak.”
- Try to focus on sharing information before giving advice, and sometimes hold off on giving advice altogether. By sharing information, we leave people free to decide for themselves in accordance with their own goals and needs. If the receiver has trouble coming up with solutions, try problem-solving together.
- Try to have frequent conversations, so as to connect feedback to events and to avoid having feedback pile up. Feedback should be well timed and, in general, should be

given at the earliest opportunity (assuming that the receiver is ready to hear it and that the setting is conducive to providing feedback at that time).

- Think about how much information the receiver can actually tolerate or use. To overload the receiver with information is to reduce the probability that s/he will be able, or will want, to use any of it.
- Check the other's understanding of what you have said--what is heard often is not what was intended. Ask the receiver to say it back to you; this will give you a chance to clear up misunderstandings right away.
- Avoid collusion, that is, silently agreeing to withhold feedback because it will be uncomfortable. For example a teacher says, "That was okay," while really being concerned about the quality of the action. The intern is silent while really thinking, "That really wasn't too good." Neither is satisfied; nothing is gained.
- Consider the range of possible consequences of the feedback. It is often helpful to check out the receiver's reaction ("How did it feel to be told that? Did you gain something you didn't have before?").

Frequent and constructive feedback is an important step toward authenticity. It helps to fashion a trusting, honest, caring, and educative relationship.

Communicating sensitive information. Normal human beings who are working at close quarters occasionally (and sometimes habitually) do something that alarms, distresses, or pains a colleague, or that the colleague so greatly disapproves that it is difficult to remain involved in the activity. What do we do about that--just live with it? To a considerable extent, we do just that for the sake of peace. That said, we also should say that there are times when we need and deserve and probably can have relief, by asking for it.

A pattern that can be helpful to follow is: "When you _____ (describe specifically what happened) _____, I _____ (tell how you were affected and or how you were made to feel) _____; I wish _____ (propose some alternative course of action, or invite discussion)."

An example: "When you corrected me in front of the class, I felt embarrassed-embarrassed enough that it was hard to collect my thoughts and to move on to the next part of the lesson. Could we talk about options for what you might do when you think I've made an error in front of the class?"

After that sort of opening, talk about *why* you are making that report and request, *why* the matter is important to you. Be careful to distinguish the behavior from the person, and especially careful to *give the other person an early chance to respond to you*, so that your opening can turn into a conversation.

All of this can be difficult to do if you are feeling upset about something. Make sure you're ready to be steady before you begin a conversation like this. If not, consider making an appointment to talk about it later (e.g., "I'd like to talk about what happened this afternoon, but I need to collect my thoughts first. Could we meet before school tomorrow?")

Providing Written Feedback

Experienced mentors know that many good ideas and suggestions can get lost in the fray of a typical school day, and therefore, it can be helpful to target specific observations where written feedback is provided. It is sometimes difficult to find the time to write feedback, so it is important for mentors to select a style and format that suits their situation. Some mentors vary the format according to their observation focus (see options outlined above, *Frameworks for Planning and Conducting Classroom Observations*), and others follow a more steady pattern that works for them. In any case, **written feedback should serve as a discussion tool**, and not as the sole source of feedback. Too often, written words that are not accompanied by conversation can be misunderstood.

Scripting lessons. Some mentors "script" lessons so that they create a running commentary of what is said and done in the classroom. The description captures *what happens* (as opposed to *making judgments* about events), so that the MT and intern have a record on which to base a conversation. The following is an example of a scripting format that has a column on the right hand side for raising questions. A form like this can be used to try to capture most of the interaction during a lesson, or it can be used with a specific focus such as scripting all the questions the teacher asks, or student questions, and so on.

Lesson Script (what is said and done during lesson)	Questions

Taking notes. Some MTs prefer to use note-taking forms that have separate columns that provide both *descriptive* and *evaluative* comments about a lesson so that interns make connections between what they did and the effectiveness of their actions. There are columns for teacher and student behaviors, a third column to indicate which aspects of the lesson should be changed or maintained, and a fourth column for comments:

Teacher Behavior	Student Behavior	Change/Maintain	Comments

Drawing Diagrams. Drawing diagrams of where students/teachers are sitting provides a way to document the grouping and traffic patterns in the classroom. This format can be helpful for considering ways in which girls and boys participate in the classroom, how active specific students are in particular lessons, or the extent to which the teacher is able to monitor the entire classroom while working with a particular group.

Checklists. Checklists of students' names can be used to track the frequency of students' contributions (number of times within a given lesson; frequency across one week) during classroom discussions, interaction with peers during group work, and so on.

Behavior and Frequency											
Student Name											

Creating forms for focused observations. Some mentors make up their own form that directs their attention to a specific focus area (or a combination of areas). Developing the form itself causes MTs to make their expectations explicit (just as they make their expectations explicit when they develop assessment rubrics for students), and enables them to observe for patterns developed in a certain area over time.

For example, MTs might develop various forms by selecting specific focus areas from the *Frameworks for Planning and Conducting Classroom Observations* and then decide whether note-taking, a checklist, scripting, etc. is most appropriate for that focus area. Below are three examples of observation forms that were developed once focus areas were selected.

Focus: Classroom Management. The following form was developed by Ginney Stokes to help her observe for classroom management techniques:

Discipline Observation Form												
Intern						Date						
Objective												
Mark each discipline and how many times it was used. You may give examples.												
The "look" Example												
The "touch" Example												
Moving closer Example												
Using the "I" statement Example												
Stern voice Example												
Take them aside Example												
Soft reprimand Example												
Whisper in their ear Example												
Signals Example												
Positive Reinforcement Example												
Lights off Example												
Verbal praise Example												
Given consequence Example												
Reminder of rules Example												
Other Example												
<p>Follow Through What consequences were used? When were they given? When were they followed through?</p>												

Focus: Subject Matter Content, Classroom Interactions, and Assessment.

Some MTs develop a form that helps them focus on several key aspects of a lesson that they want to look for consistently over time. This helps communicate to interns what the MT values, and helps the MT balance attention across a variety of areas.

Ginney Stokes developed this form to guide her observations:

Intern: Date: Objective:
Which of the following were used? Math ___ Kinesthetic ___ Musical ___ Nature ___ Artistic ___ Social ___ Linguistic ___ Self-Knowledge ___ Example:
Check the disciplines that were covered: Social Studies ___ Math ___ Science ___ Reading ___ Writing ___ Spelling ___ English ___ Example:
Students worked in the following ways: Group ___ Individual ___ Partner ___ Example:
The assessments used were: journal ___ manipulatives ___ test ___ oral ___ anecdotal records ___ writing ___ reading ___ worksheets ___ other ___ Example:
Evidence of Modeling:
Evidence of Monitoring and Adjusting:
Evidence that Objective was Met:

Focus: Lesson Planning and Lesson Delivery. Some forms provide a more generic structure that helps MTs and interns think together about areas that are attended to during planning and delivery of a lesson. They may be helpful in identifying areas that require further attention in future lessons.

Lesson Planning and Lesson Delivery
Date: _____ Subject: _____ Setting: _____ # of Students: _____ Intern: _____ CT: _____ Field Instructor: _____
<i>Check if evident</i>
Lesson Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Lesson plan completed and reviewed prior to instruction ☞ Evidence of advance preparation and organization (e.g., materials ready) ☞ Lesson appropriate for age, grade, ability ☞ Lesson adapted to specific academic, social, linguistic needs of students
Appropriate Lesson Components (e.g., Presentation, Guided Practice, Individual Practice, Closing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Gives clear directions and explanations ☞ Sets warm and positive tone ☞ Uses “think aloud” to make visible language, practices, processes needed ☞ Models learning strategies ☞ Checks for understanding ☞ Uses appropriate pacing and flow for lesson ☞ Connects concepts and ideas ☞ Provides variety of student participation structures (individual, partners, groups, projects) ☞ Provides appropriate support for <i>all</i> students to participate successfully in lesson ☞ Provides opportunity for transfer of control to student ☞ Uses appropriate audio, visual, technology equipment ☞ Uses guided practice to actively monitor student understanding ☞ Uses independent practice to monitor student understanding ☞ Uses assessment to monitor and adjust lesson ☞ Provides adequate time for closing: student closure, teacher summarization, connect lesson to future learning, assessment

Creating and Maintaining Classroom Learning Community

- ☞ Maintains classroom routines (e.g., greets students, attendance, setting chart, daily reports)
- ☞ Uses firm, confident voice and posture
- ☞ Professional appearance
- ☞ Uses praise appropriately to motivate and provide feedback
- ☞ Uses proactive measures and controls
 - Nonverbal signals/cues (e.g., “teacher look”; hand signals; proximity; mobility; visibility)
 - Verbal cues/signals (e.g., specific praise statements; restatement of rules)
- ☞ Moves and positions self to effectively support lesson/activity
- ☞ Implements appropriate and effective consequences and rewards

Examples/Comments:

Videotaping and audio taping. Another "text" that can be created to support interns' learning is a video or audio recording of their teaching. Unlike hand-written records, videotapes represent the "sights and sounds" of the classroom in their full magnitude, and audio tapes capture dialogue. So there are many advantages to creating a videotaped record of a lesson or portion of a lesson. Frequently, it is helpful to an intern who is not used to being taped to be able to take the tape home and watch (or listen to) it privately. That allows the individual to stop and start the tape at any time, have reactions privately to seeing and hearing oneself on tape (perhaps for the first time), and to identify which aspects of the tape s/he would like to view with the MT, or perhaps share with the field instructor or colleagues. Viewing of videotapes or hearing of audio tapes should have a planned purpose so the observer(s) are looking (hearing) together with a particular focus.

Dialogue journals or email exchanges. Some MTs and their interns find interactive writing to be a time-saver and a valuable addition to their ongoing conversations about the intern's teaching. Dialogue journals or ongoing e-mail conversations provide avenues for both interns and MTs to reflect on how a lesson/day/unit went, raise questions and concerns about future directions, or invite a topic for future conversation. Like all written feedback, it is important that the journal not stand alone as a form of communication, but that it be accompanied by conversation about the ideas raised.

Cards or notes of encouragement. Some mentors have found that a well-timed, short, to-the-point compliment or note of encouragement can provide the positive reinforcement an intern needs and show appreciation for the good work an intern is doing.

Coaching and Scaffolding

Sometimes talking *about* effective teaching is not enough. Like athletes who are trying to perfect a certain move or technique, interns frequently need more deliberate and

strategic support in certain areas to understand what is meant by advice being given, and to learn to carry it out step by step. That is where coaching and scaffolding come in. As the intern takes on more substantial teaching duties, the MT and field instructor should be coaching more formally and systematically:

Planning for the coaching process. Coaching begins even before the intern's teaching begins, with a discussion of the intern's plans, both for the lesson(s) to be taught and for the intern's learning to teach. As discussed in the section on "Focused Observations and Debriefing," and "Providing Written Feedback," the intern and coach can discuss:

- what the coach will watch and listen for while the intern is teaching
- what data the coach will collect to support discussion afterward
- what the intern's aim is for his/her professional learning as a result of the coaching

Joint planning for the interns' professional learning is just as important as co-planning for the children's learning. Note-taking, audio taping and videotaping all can be very useful in coaching and in self-assessment by the intern.

Stepping in. In some situations it will be appropriate for the MT or field instructor to provide on-the-spot coaching during a particular lesson, with follow-up conversations regarding the MT's or field instructor's reasoning for briefly "stepping in" to the teaching role or offering advice during the lesson. It is helpful if the MT and intern have talked about, and agreed upon, instances when "stepping in" would be especially helpful, so one or the other isn't surprised by such a move. It is important this sort of "stepping in" is viewed as a normal part of supporting a novice's learning to teach. It can be helpful for the mentor to invite the intern to do the same when s/he is teaching to help make the practice a normal part of their co-teaching.

Demonstrating and modeling. As with powerful writing, there are times to "show" rather than "tell" to get a point across most effectively. Modeling can take the form of a planned demonstration where the mentor and intern agree when, where and why a demonstration of a particular teaching practice would be helpful. It is also important to remember that the mentor's thought processes about the action should be shared so the intern understands the thinking and rationale behind it. It also may be done spontaneously in "stepping in" fashion if a "teachable moment" arises.

Conversation. After the intern has taught the lesson, the mentor can begin the follow-up session by asking what the intern saw, heard, and thought at the time, and what s/he now thinks upon reflection. That question gets information for the mentor, promotes recall and reflection by the intern, and lets the intern help to shape the conversation. Sometimes, starting with the question makes it possible for the mentor to compliment an honest self-assessment rather than criticize the intern's performance.

Promoting self-assessment. Then the mentor can try to extend the intern's self-assessment. As discussed in the section on "Debriefing," the mentor should start by

describing what s/he saw and heard, in enough detail to help the novice to recall it clearly (or see it for the first time). Here's where notes, data, audio tapes, and videotapes can be very helpful. On the basis of this description, the mentor offers a few selected interpretations and assessments, with a mixture of compliment and criticism. Concrete suggestions for ways to improve are always helpful aspects of criticism.

The understandings set out in the preceding section on "Communication" can help the intern and mentor to have substantial, honest, and useful conversations that examine the *teaching* carefully.

Fostering Reflection

As many ideas in this document indicate, although a substantial portion of a teacher's work takes place in the classroom in the form of interactions with children, an equally important part of the work goes on *inside the teacher's head*. The active mental life associated with good teaching includes:

- asking questions
- considering alternatives
- exploring options
- generating ideas

Interns reflect on many aspects of their experiences on their own, with their colleagues, or under the guidance of their field and course instructors. But MTs have the most detailed knowledge of interns' circumstances and are therefore in a prime position to foster reflection before, during and after teaching. Donald Schon called these two forms of reflection:

- *reflection-on-action*: systematic analysis of professional activity after a task is completed
- *reflection-in-action*: immediate reframing or rethinking during teaching

He argued that expert professionals engage in both on a regular basis. Moreover, experienced professionals can be helpful to novices by modeling such behavior and by encouraging novices to be reflective.

Modeling how to make sense of classroom life. Classrooms are busy and demanding places that can generate a profusion of emotions and reactions across a school day, week or semester. Spending time with interns to help them process or make sense of events of the day, or helping them to notice the effects of their on-the-spot decisions helps them know what to continue doing and what to change, and why. Experienced mentors often "think out loud" to model the reflective process, to illustrate for the novice what reflection-on-action looks like. Some find occasions to model their thinking during

teaching to help interns understand how, when, where and why reflection-in-action guides their decision making.

Stimulating discussion through questioning. The reflective teacher always has another question to ponder, and novices can benefit from hearing the questions experienced teachers grapple with. They also benefit from engaging with experienced teachers in exploring those questions. The following examples, adapted from a list of questions offered in *Mentoring Beginning Teachers* by Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts (2000, pp. 42-3), could be framed as questions an experienced teacher might ask him/herself, or they could be framed as questions to discuss with novices about their emerging practice:

- What was one of my key successes as a teacher this past day/week?
- What are my teaching strengths? What are the best things I have to offer kids?
- What am I doing to create a warm, friendly learning environment in my classroom?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would I rate this day/week? Why?
- During what part of my day did I feel that "real" teaching and learning was going on?
- How do I know when my students are learning?
- What is my greatest concern at this time?
- What seems to be going well with classroom management? What problems need addressing?
- What factors make some lessons flow better than others?
- What successes have I had in working with parents? What else could I be doing?
- Which aspects of teaching make me feel least comfortable?
- What resources do I have available to address some of my questions?

Professional inquiry and goal setting. Reflection takes time, and that time will only be reserved when there is a commitment to reflective thought. Mentors who share with their interns how and when they take time to reflect help interns understand the key role it plays in one's overall professional growth. Some mentors follow a regular pattern of setting aside a certain amount of time per week or month for reflective activity. Others have a daily routine (e.g., journal writing, conversation with colleagues, team planning) that builds in time for reflection. Some take on mini-projects that help them focus their attention in a particular area for a time period, such as trying out the use of portfolios and comparing it to other forms of assessment used in the past. In addition to finding time, finding a focus or purpose for reflection helps busy professionals perceive its benefits. When the time spent results in a better form of assessment, or a more efficient floor plan for the classroom, or increased student involvement, MTs and interns find the time spent to be worthwhile. In the section that follows, the portfolio development process--another form of professional reflection--is outlined.

Supporting Portfolio Development

A professional portfolio is a collection of carefully selected artifacts that represent a teacher's progress and accomplishments in learning to teach, especially in supporting meaningful learning for *all* students. It is a professional learning tool that interns can use to reflect on their growth as a teacher over time, clarify their philosophy and teaching goals, connect those ideas to their emerging practice, and communicate their accomplishments to prospective employers.

Feedback from prior interns indicates that although not all employers review portfolios, many give prospective applicants an opportunity to refer to them during interviews. More importantly, many interns from previous years have reported that the experience of preparing a portfolio and the effort involved in articulating and representing their talents, abilities, expertise and accomplishments was an invaluable tool in preparing them for job interviews. They felt more confident and prepared to talk about their philosophy, goals and experience after engaging in the portfolio development process. Moreover, many states are encouraging beginning and experienced teachers to develop professional portfolios to promote ongoing professional learning. The portfolio can become a valuable tool to foster ongoing learning throughout one's career. This section outlines key roles CTs can play in supporting interns' engagement in portfolio processes.

MTs Encourage interns to engage in the portfolio process. The creation of a professional portfolio is a *professional development process* through which teachers document their progress and accomplishments in learning to teach for themselves, for their colleagues, and for prospective employers. Interns engage in several processes that are also associated with the classroom-based work with their MTs, that assist them in acquiring and making sense of new knowledge and skills and reflecting on their ongoing work in the classroom:¹

- ***Reading***: gathering evidence of new knowledge and information from texts, articles, teaching resources
- ***Writing***: formal and informal writing that demonstrates thoughtfulness and integration of new knowledge
- ***Thinking***: making new meaning, connecting ideas, taking stock, constructing new perspectives

While the above processes may take place individually, it is also important for teachers to interact with colleagues to express their ideas, get feedback and learn from each other. Therefore, interns and their colleagues, in TE 501 and TE 502 seminars, in their TE 801-4 courses, and in the professional communities within their schools, also engage in:

- ***Interacting***: sharing ideas, discussing and defending, actively constructing artifacts during group inquiry

¹ The categories for the portfolio process as represented in this document are adapted from Wilcox, B. & Tomei, L. (1999). *Professional Portfolios for Teachers: A Guide for Learners, Experts, and Scholars*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

- **Demonstrating:** presenting, critiquing, publishing, enhancing traditional lessons, applying thinking and learning

MTs complement TE 501/2 support. Although the portfolio process necessarily cuts across all aspects of the internship experience, the task of creating the portfolio itself is officially connected to the TE 501 and TE 502 seminars, where the field instructors provide support and guidance and clarify requirements. Below are some suggested ways that MTs--those who are quite familiar with many aspects of the interns' development--can provide advice and support to interns.

MTs advise interns as they identify, share, and select potential portfolio artifacts. As interns engage in co-planning and co-teaching, they will be asked to gather and reflect upon various **artifacts** that will become potential portfolio items. In a sense, they are working on a "rough draft" of their portfolio across the internship year that can be thought of as having two types of activities:

- **Collecting:** A major part of developing a teaching practice involves acquiring new knowledge and skills. Artifacts that may represent interns' gathering of new knowledge and skills may include items such as:

book notes	textbook summaries
journal articles	trade books
annotated bibliographies	historical timelines
curriculum overviews	content standards
lesson plans	charts and graphs
assessment tools	posters
videotapes or audio tapes	world wide websites
- **Working:** By themselves, teaching resources do not demonstrate a teacher's professional knowledge and skill. Attempts to create, test and hone their new knowledge and skill help document how they are making connections, reflecting on and assessing their teaching practice, and finding ways to learn with and from their colleagues--these are the very activities they engage in with their collaborating teachers. MTs can remind interns that artifacts that represent these aspects of an intern's professional learning may include:

reactions to readings	concept maps
problem-solving strategies	philosophy statement drafts
self-evaluation of teaching	feedback from colleagues on teaching
unit plans and reflections on teaching	reflections on student learning
videotapes of teaching	sample assessments
critiques of use of websites or electronic software in the classroom	group projects

Obtaining document permission. The portfolio process will begin in the fall months and continue on through the spring semester. Since this involves collecting examples of

classroom interactions (audio tapes, videotapes, still photographs), examples of students' written work, or information from short interviews with students, interns need to obtain parent/guardian permission to do so in accordance with school building and district policy. A sample cover letter, "Consent for Documentation of Classroom Events and Student Work During the Internship" are available at [Forms and Documents for Interns](#). Interns may use this example, or create their own in consultation with their CT and building/district policy.

MTs work with interns through interaction and demonstration. Collecting and working with artifacts become especially helpful when interns take advantage of opportunities to share their ideas with colleagues. Then they are able to articulate their thinking, reflect on their teaching decisions and actions, and learn from their ongoing practice. The TE 501 and TE 502 seminars, as well as TE 801-4 courses, are places where interns will have opportunities to discuss many of the artifacts they may consider including in their portfolio.

MTs are in a key position to help interns identify and reflect on potential items that provide evidence of the heart of their work: engaging in standards-based teaching and meaningful student learning. Since MTs are present and actively involved in collaborative unit teaching, they can be especially helpful in advising their interns regarding what might count as evidence of the intern's standards-based teaching and students' classroom learning (e.g., use of a particular assessment tool; samples of student work that represent their learning; observation notes from a classroom discussion). These same discussions also have the potential to help interns and MTs reflect simultaneously on whether and how the goals for unit teaching were met. MTs can help interns identify ahead of time what to collect, and organize themselves to collect information in feasible ways.

MTs are interested readers for final drafting, editing and publishing of the portfolio. Across the internship year, interns collect far more artifacts than they will be able to include in a portfolio that "showcases" their strengths and professional accomplishments. Interns will need to select those items that *best represent* and *most effectively communicate* their professional learning to an audience who is not familiar with the day-to-day details of your experience. The selection process, therefore, includes: (a) choosing items as well as providing commentary (as needed) that help the audience make sense of how each artifact represents your learning and accomplishments; and (b) making decisions about how to categorize, organize and present your information. MTs can be "interested readers" who provide valuable input in this final stage.

- ***Showcasing:*** Artifacts with commentary that represent an intern's progress and accomplishments in learning to teach are included in the "final draft" of the professional portfolio. Generally, these are artifacts that have been shared, critiqued and revised so that they can feel confident that they meet professional standards to which they will be held. There are several different types of artifacts that are needed to represent expertise and talent as a learner and professional. The following items are examples of artifacts interns may choose to include in their portfolio:

Background Information	Presentations and Best Papers	Teaching Artifacts and Reflections (with commentary)	Professional Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume • www Homepage • Background information on teaching context • Background information on teacher preparation program • Involvement in professional organizations • Community service record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy Statement related to teaching for understanding and learning community development • Personal Statement describing reasons and motivations for choosing the teaching profession • Goals Statement regarding immediate and future goals as an educator • Analysis of curriculum, teaching and/or student learning • Outlines for formal presentations • Case studies of student learning • Representations of your use of technology (e.g., computer generated teaching materials) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of unit goals and instructional plan that represent teaching for understanding and learning community development • List of resources used • Sample lesson plans • Assessment tools • Evaluation of student learning • Evidence of meeting individual students' needs • Photographs of class projects or displays, discussions, bulletin boards • Sample student work • Reflective commentary, self-evaluation • Feedback from colleagues on teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts • Letters of Recommendation • Letters of Appreciation • Awards, certificates

MTs provide advice on organizing the portfolio to look professional. While the above suggestions are listed in categories, only the interns can decide on the best way to organize and present their artifacts to an outside audience. MTs can provide advice about a design that:

- shows that the intern has met the Teacher Preparation Program Standards
- focuses on how the intern's teaching has led to meaningful student learning
- is creative and original
- displays organizational skills
- provides a table of contents and/or overall organizer
- divides the materials into sections that are clearly labeled and easily understood
- communicates key attributes, talents and values
- uses tools to enhance attractiveness (lettering, photographs, captions, charts, color, spacing/arrangement, borders, computer graphics, graphic organizers, variety of materials)
- shows careful editing and proofreading

Showcasing and celebrating at the Intern Convocation. Mentor teachers are members of the audience at the Intern Convocation where interns share their portfolios with family, colleagues, course and field instructors, and program personnel. MTs take special pride in knowing that they provided critical advice and support to interns in creating their portfolios.

Supporting Teacher Education Courses

Why ask an intern who is up to his or her neck in a particular school classroom also to participate in the organized studies of TE 801 through TE 804? Why do field instructors hold bi-weekly TE 501/2 seminars in schools? Why ask mentor teachers, who are directly and variously affected by interns coming and going to course meetings and their activities for the courses, to cooperate in that? Providing interns extensive guided practice in classroom teaching is one important purpose, but is not the only important purpose, of the internship. There are two others: connecting study with practice; and constructing reasoned positions on a range of issues.

Connecting study with practice. By the time the internship begins, interns and their instructors have invested a good deal of time and effort in studying the options for managing classrooms and motivating students; for accommodating diversity; and for planning, teaching and assessing in literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science. As yet, however, interns have had only modest opportunities to practice those options or to connect their studies to classroom situations and teacher actions, particularly in a situation that allows them to see their actions unfold across a school year. If interns do not get that practice and achieve those connections, they may have wasted a good deal of their work so far.

The year-long internship enables novices to:

- go beyond the introductions to the teaching of literacy, mathematics, social studies and science that they experienced in TE 401 and 402
- help them to connect earlier studies with their actions as teachers, so that they more likely can continue to draw on those studies over a period of years in teaching
- build upon their introductory-level knowledge to help them develop skill and proficiency in applying new knowledge in context-specific situations--at *this* grade level, in *this* school, in *this* district

Combining guided practice and continuing coursework in the intern year provides a reasonable opportunity to make such connections, just as many experienced teachers would argue that teacher education ought to do. Indeed, one well might argue that many experienced teachers' primary disappointment with teacher preparation has been the failure to make those connections, and that the internship--combining extensive practice work with course work--is a major step toward remedying that defect.

Getting clear about issues. As interns begin the intern year, the volume and the intensity of their experience in the position of teacher rises very rapidly. In a far more intense and practical way than they could have done at any time before the internship, interns begin to recognize more of the full range of responsibilities of a teacher. They begin to see more clearly that important issues are at stake and sometimes are debated in schooling. They begin to discover that they must be able to give good reasons for what they do, and that "I prefer," "I believe," and "my style" are not good enough reasons for a teacher's actions.

If they are to cope and to grow in their first years of teaching, they must begin now informing themselves about, and constructing several informed and reasoned positions on, a number of issues in teaching. For example:

- When they decide how to treat a portion of the published curriculum, choose or make instructional materials, make or choose assessments, host parents at back-to-school nights, or discuss the curriculum with colleagues, they will need clear, well-developed stances about what is important to learn and to teach in literacy, science, social studies, math, etc.
- When they design activities, plan lessons, implement those lessons in the class, administer tests and other assessments, or explain their practice to parents or administrators, they will need a thoughtful stance about how children learn worthwhile school subjects and how adults help them to do that.
- When a parent makes a proposal or demand regarding the education of a child, they will need to have clearly thought out their roles and responsibilities for each child's education--whether they are responding simply as a stand-in for the parent, or as an employee of the school, or whether they might have some independent guardianship responsibility with separate and distinct duties. This is not an easy question; it is an important one.
- When they make rules, administer discipline, assign grades, compose student groups, decide whether to persist with a topic or move on to another topic, or decide how to allocate their time among students, they will need a clear, informed, and well-reasoned position about educational opportunity, fairness, or justice.
- When in future years they are evaluated by principals, they should be informed about the various approaches to evaluating teachers and their relative contributions to the teacher's growth.
- When they are asked (or told) to attend professional development activities, they should know the characteristics of useful professional development activity, so that they can make informed choices and remedy the defects of activities that they do attend.

That is not a complete list, of course, but it is plenty to merit time and attention in courses for the internship.

Combining practice work and courses. Helping interns to construct reasoned stances from sound materials and to connect their studies with their actions as teachers is important work for the internship year. That is why interns have courses to take. When we consider the increasing complexity of teachers' work and the challenges that teachers now face daily, we might conclude that it is good that they do have these courses.

That said, it also must be recognized that instructors cannot achieve the desired results no matter what interns think or do, any more than schoolteachers can achieve good results no matter what their students think or do. To the extent that interns adopt the mental stance that the internship is only about practice work in school classrooms, they are likely to cause themselves (and others) a good deal of frustration and tension. To the extent that they adopt the mental stance that the internship also is about extending their studies and connecting those studies with that practice work, and about constructing professional stances that new teachers will need in their first years of teaching, interns will find it considerably easier to manage time and take advantage of the opportunities that the combination of practice work and courses presents.

How the courses are organized. The approved design of the program allocates to each 800-level course 30 hours of course time when interns meet with course instructors on campus (see calendar), plus an average of 3 hours per week (per course) for field work that is complementary to the interns' classroom-based work (either within the classroom, the school, or in the community). Instructors provide suggestions for the use of the "field time" to interns, MTs and field instructors, who then work together to develop meaningful uses of that time. In response to the various "phases" of the internship, 800-level course instructors make very large adjustments, squeezing their courses into 10 three-hour meetings that make room for three consecutive weeks of full-time participation in schools in the fall and at least four consecutive weeks in the spring. Just as instructors are sensitive to increased demands on interns' time during certain weeks of each semester, so too must MTs be sensitive to demands on interns' time to complete required projects, discussions and presentations. Ongoing study and reflection is an essential part of a year-long internship.

Bi-weekly TE 501 seminars and individual interactions with the field instructor provide additional support to the intern in carrying out his/her multiple responsibilities and getting the year off to a solid start. Typically, seminars are held for 1-1/2 to 2 hours every other week, and field instructors may request up to an additional 30-60 minutes every other week for consultation with the intern during the school day to debrief observations, provide support for lesson planning, or discuss other issues as needed. While field instructors do their best to be flexible in scheduling the seminars, they do need the MTs' support in making sure interns are released from classroom responsibilities in order to attend the *full time block* set aside for the seminar. When interns arrive late or leave early

from seminars, it interrupts important discussions, and interns who are not present miss out.

The need for MTs' support. As this guide makes clear, interns will, of course, need their collaborating teachers' support to get full value from the combination of practice teaching and course studies. Co-planning and co-teaching by intern and MT tend to minimize disruptions associated with interns' attendance at course meetings. Each year, course instructors are to inform MTs at the beginning of the semester about assignments related to the course and use of the field time allocated to each course; this information will provide MTs opportunities to figure out how to support connections between studies and practice.

Collaborating teachers are in a unique position to help interns to make essential connections between their course work and practice work by talking with them about the course work and looking for opportunities to make those connections. If the intern is having trouble seeing or making connections, that could be a signal that either the field instructor or course instructor may need to provide additional support for the intern, and the CT can play a key role in helping them understand that need.

Grading for TE 801 through TE 804. TE 801 through TE 804 are graded on the 0.0 to 4.0 scale. In accordance with the academic standards of the University, students at the Lifelong Graduate or Graduate level must receive at least a 2.0 to be awarded credit in TE 801, TE 802, TE 803, and TE 804. Also, teacher candidates must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 to remain in good standing. Because TE 801 is a prerequisite for TE 803, and TE 802 is a prerequisite for TE 804, interns who receive below a 2.0 in either prerequisite will have to retake that course before proceeding further in the internship. The three courses for each semester (TE501, 801, 802 for fall and TE502, 803, 804 for spring) are expected to be taken as a group. Therefore, if an intern earns less than a 2.0 in any one of the three fall courses, the intern will not proceed to spring semester internship. All of these courses are necessary to be recommended for certification; those who receive below a 2.0 in any of these courses will not be recommended for certification.

The dangers of incompletes. Because TE 801 and 802 are prerequisites to the spring semester courses, grades of Incomplete for TE 801 or TE 802 must be finished before the beginning of the following semester; an intern with an unresolved Incomplete grade will not be allowed to continue in the internship. It is best to avoid incompletes entirely.

Problem Solving

First and foremost, we should understand and agree that difficulty is normal in the internship. A novice--the intern--is trying to learn to do complex, subtle and difficult work. The intern, collaborating teacher, and field instructor are trying to have a productive working relationship in challenging circumstances: The working relationships

must keep changing with the interns' growth. Because trouble is normal in the internship, the program has normal arrangements for dealing with it. This section describes some of those normal arrangements. It also should persuade you to use those arrangements early and without embarrassment. Please remember that:

- All of the people who work with any intern want that intern to succeed.
- Involving some of those people in a problematic situation is an attempt to solve a problem in order to have a successful internship.

Common troubles: potential remedies. The left column in the following table describes some common early problems that might point to more serious difficulties later in the year. All interns will be in some of these troubles at times, due to the normal anxiety and stress of taking on new responsibilities and working with extensive feedback from others.

The right column of the table provides some suggestions for responding to those signs of trouble. Much of the time, early attention of the modest sorts suggested first in each box will support improvements. But not always. In that case, you may need to take the more substantial steps that involve others who work with or have responsibilities for the intern. At some time, you might need to invoke the conflict- resolution procedure that is described in the section after the table.

Situations	Potential actions
<p>basic interaction difficulties: doesn't make eye contact with kids or engage them in interaction; keeps too much distance from students; doesn't notice what's going on with children that calls for a change in activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • videotape the intern, and view and discuss the tape with the intern • have the intern work with individuals and small groups for a while to build confidence and ease with student and teacher interaction • have the intern find ways to interact with kids during recess or lunch to provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to build communication. • set specific objectives for eye contact, interaction with students, monitoring of student work, etc., and follow through
<p>avoiding or rejecting constructive, constructively-given feedback: being defensive, blaming others, always having an excuse--or saying yes to feedback but not changing anything</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a frank conversation about the situation using concrete illustrations that help the intern understand both the problem and the specific behaviors that need to be changed • find out what receiving criticism means to the intern; tell what it means to you and other professionals • make and discuss the distinction between talking about practices and their consequences, versus talking about persons and their competence • renew expectation that feedback will be given, and how that will be done, and how the intern will respond to it • call for a three-way conference among the intern, collaborating teacher, and field instructor to emphasize

	the importance of the situation and increase the resources devoted to solving the problem
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Situations	Potential actions
<p>not meeting expectations or keeping agreements: doesn't get journals in, doesn't produce plans before teaching, doesn't have a lesson plan when you observe, agrees to do things but doesn't do them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore with the intern ways that professionals make sure they get things done, such as writing down expectations and deadlines or keeping a calendar specifically for commitments • have a frank conversation including feedback about the situation, clearly outlining the consequences for not following through • ask for a three-way conference

<p>persistent problems with relationships with students: trying to be students' buddy, not setting appropriate boundaries for interaction, avoiding or resisting the authoritative parts of the teacher's role and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss specifically how a friendly demeanor and respect for students as persons can be reconciled with authoritative acts by teachers • assign specific authoritative roles or responsibilities in particular situations, for protected practice, and tell the intern why you are doing so • if the intern sees this as a matter of deep principle, let the intern run the class according to his or her principles for an hour or day and video-tape; then view the tape and discuss with the intern
<p>expresses unrealistic views of teaching and doesn't adjust to the current situation: says "that's not my style;" blames students or others, saying s/he would be just fine in a different setting; shows that s/he does not yet realize how much work and what kinds of work are involved in teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a frank conversation with feedback • ask the intern to join you in a serious and specific assessment of the actual probability that things would be different somewhere else • discuss the proposition that having something to learn is not the same thing as incompetence • plan a weekly schedule with the intern, set deadlines for work, and talk about the problem that this is intended to address
<p>takes no initiative in planning or in the classroom: relies heavily or completely on MT's directions; produces no ideas about what to do, doesn't spend necessary time and effort</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a frank conversation with feedback • try to find out how taking no initiative might seem right or necessary to the intern, and address that reasoning • list some concrete possibilities for situations where the intern can work on taking initiative and set some clear expectations in writing • discuss the proposition that there's no way to do it perfectly the first time • have brainstorming sessions to demonstrate that initiative calls more for work than inspiration • identify other forms of support that the intern may need to participate more fully

Situations	Potential actions
<p>resists professional responsibility, responsibility for own learning: coming in tired, late, or unprepared, absent a lot; inappropriate dress; doing only what is required, not trying to find connection between course work and classroom work, not engaging the MT about teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a frank conversation with feedback • ask sincerely if the intern actually wants to teach school, or may have entered into teacher education for other reasons • ask how life other than school is going • invite the intern to switch roles to appraise his or her own performance • make and record specific expectations; follow up
<p>doesn't get organized: wastes time, uses time poorly; doesn't seem to have plans, calendars or lists; frequently does things at last minute; forgets meetings, doesn't deliver materials as agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the intern's work and study habits; ask if they need to change and, if so, how • discuss specific ways in which professionals manage to cope with the many competing demands on their time and attention. Explore which strategies will be most helpful to intern, given his or her habits • make plans with dates and deadlines, work out time lines, establish deadlines. Put it in writing
<p>avoids conversation: never raises questions, concerns, issues, or interests; if asked, says everything is fine; doesn't respond to attempts to converse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try informal conversations about other topics to develop trust • have frank conversation about standard regarding reflection on teaching, making sure the intern understands what reflective behavior looks like • try guided fast writes using questions such as What went well? What didn't? What would I do differently? • in TE 501/2 meetings, ask interns anonymously to write problems they have had in classroom for group discussion
<p>over-confidence: thinks s/he already knows; wants to jump right into it, just do it; resists observations, co-planning, and reflecting on teaching; only hears positive feedback, won't accept negative comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • let the intern try something and use the experience to reflect on areas needing growth, and whether and how similar experiences would be the most helpful next step for the intern's learning • ask for written journals to promote analysis and reflection in relation to professional learning • have a frank conversation about what the intern hopes to achieve by "just teaching" as the main part of the internship, and how additional professional experiences can enhance the intern's learning
<p>perfectionist to a fault: worries about every little thing; at school more time than is consistent with health; doesn't finish things because they are never good enough; hears and produces only criticism, not praise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss this proposition: If it is worth doing, it is worth doing only moderately well • ask to see fast writes, drafts, and other unfinished products to understand what the intern's specific concerns are • ask for small self-evaluations that accentuate the positive • discuss what "learning to teach" means to find out why "perfection" is the main standard; help the intern focus on particular standards in smaller pieces

Levels of Problem-solving and Conflict Resolution

Interns, mentor teachers, and field instructors are most extensively and continuously involved in situations that might produce conflicts, so these guidelines are written with them in mind. Others should follow a similar logic. In general, there is an expectation that persons will try each procedure carefully and in good faith before they try the next one.

When we employ any of these procedures we should keep in mind the following goals and principles:

- persons needing support should get the full benefit of the resources that the program has available;
- no one should be subjected to arbitrary action without being fully informed of the reasons for that action and having opportunities to speak and to change;
- in all that we do, we should strive to preserve civility and working relationships;
- there always should be adequate documentation to support and justify any actions that are taken.

Level One: Try to resolve the matter yourselves.

Prepare for a conversation, in several ways: Get clear about what you think the issue is. You might try writing about it or talking about it with someone. Try to phrase your conception of the issue in ways that are civil, non-threatening, not blaming, and most likely to promote a resolution. Think about some possible solutions or ways of proceeding that you might propose, and remind yourself to remain open to possibilities that the other person might propose. Practice in front of a mirror to be sure that your facial expressions and tone of voice will not contradict your speech.

In the conversation: Use statements that express what you observe, or what you feel, or what you think you need, rather than statements that blame the other person for something. Check your understanding of what the other is saying by paraphrasing what you heard them say and asking, "Is this what you mean?" If the issue causes strong emotional reactions, you both might want to take time to think about it overnight and talk about it more tomorrow. Try to find a solution that works for both of you. Decide when and how you will check whether you are making progress toward that solution.

Document the agreement and follow up: Each of you should write a paragraph explaining what you think the conversation was about and describing the solution you agreed to. Compare paragraphs to be sure you both have the same understanding, and exchange them. Check progress as agreed.

Level Two: Involve nearby third parties

Sometimes, we cannot resolve things ourselves, but nearby colleagues can help us to do so. For interns, mentor teachers, and field instructors, some nearby third parties are teacher education liaisons (TEs), principals, and team coordinators. Any or all of them might help you to consider aspects of the situation that you had not considered, and to discover resolutions that you cannot find by yourselves. Involving third parties constructively calls for some thought and care.

Prepare. Normally, the third party has no way or reason to be acquainted with the specifics of the problem. You will have to inform that person in order to get help from him/her. Each party to the situation should take some time and make some notes about what the third party will need to know to get involved constructively. The third party will be trying to understand the different perspectives of the persons that s/he's trying to help, so you should start doing that, too. Get clear about what you think the situation is, what's important to consider, and how to proceed civilly even though there are strong feelings involved.

The meeting. The third party's chances of helping you find a solution are reduced severely, for example, by treating them like a judge who's expected to render a law-like decision that binds everyone. It may be that the third party will know of some policy or decision that is relevant. For the most part, though, the third party will be trying to act like a mutual acquaintance or friend who has a bit of distance from the situation, or a different way of looking at it, and so might help to discover resolutions. Give the third party some room to define her or his own role in the matter.

Again, it will be helpful to be descriptive and specific, to avoid loaded language, and to try to speak and listen clearly. It will be helpful if you exert yourself to find the good sense or potential virtue in any perspective or suggestion that the third party might offer; that's why you involved them. It will help if you look for win-win resolutions.

Write down the solution, check for mutual clarity and agreement, and follow up according to the agreement.

Level Three: Call for a Team Review

A "Team Review" is a meeting that involves, typically, an intern, collaborating teacher, field instructor, and the Program Director or the Team Coordinator, or both. The Review can and sometimes should involve other persons, by arrangement. The Review is intended to be the most that a team can do to reach an authoritative, wise, educative, and humane resolution of a situation. All involved should be trying to make it that.

Decisions with major impact, for example, that involve an involuntary change in the intern's placement, removal of an intern from the placement or from the program, or severance of the Team's relations with a MT, should be made in Team Reviews.

Accordingly, the Team Review is conducted more formally than discussions at levels one and two. All parties do have opportunities to speak without interruption or commentary. The mentor teacher, who is in fact an instructor in the teacher preparation program, is treated as such in the Review. Often, the Team Review includes a period in which the intern is asked to leave the room, so that the instructors can consult about the situation and their responsibilities to the intern and to others such as the MT's pupils.

Level Four: Other options

Interns are enrolled students at MSU. MSU's statement of "Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University" can be found on the Web page <http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm>, or at the Student Services office. The "AFR" spells out students' rights and responsibilities at MSU, as well as procedures and principles for disciplinary proceedings, grievances, and appeals. Some rules of thumb about all this:

- A grievance is a formal act that involves the preparation of a document, and probably a formal hearing before a panel composed under the guidelines laid out in the AFR. Normally, a student's grievance would be expected to assert that particular rights, as laid out in the AFR, have been violated in specific ways. It is important to recognize that the grievance is a more legalistic process than those described above, and is closely tied to the principles and procedures laid out in the AFR.
- Normally, filing a grievance would be thought to be premature if the student has not first talked with the University Ombudsman, or staff in the Student Services office, who have a responsibility of advocacy for and advising of students. Since grievance under the AFR is a formal process, it will be wise to consult with the Ombudsman or Student Services first.
- Normally, an intern's grievance under the AFR would be tendered to the Chair of the Department of Teacher Education. Normally, a formal grievance to the department level will be thought to be premature if the intern has not exhausted her or his options in the team, that is, if there has been no Team Review. Similarly, an appeal to the Dean or the Provost or the President will be thought to be premature if the intern has not used his or her options with the TE Department.

Mentor teachers are invited to assume that, as school-based teacher educators, they have both their avenues of appeal to their school and district and avenues of appeal to the appropriate elementary Teacher Education Team and the Department of Teacher Education. If a Collaborating Teacher foresees dissatisfaction with their Elementary Team and a need to involve the principal or another district official, it will be prudent to

involve the principal earlier, in level two or level three, for the sake of preserving organizational relationships.

Field Instructors formally are university employees; as such, their chain of supervision runs from the Team Coordinator to the Program Director to the Department Chairperson. Many field instructors also are graduate students, to whose graduate education their work as field instructor should contribute.

Collaborating Teacher Self-Reflection and Discussion Tool

The ideas listed in this reflection and discussion tool were provided by former interns in response to the following questions: *Which mentoring practices especially supported your professional learning? What questions should MTs ask themselves about their mentoring practice?* The categories below correspond to the topics discussed above in the “Mentoring Practices” section. Given the level of detail and the overlap of ideas across categories, it is unlikely that MTs would review the entire list of questions at once. Here are some suggested ways to use the tool:

- *Select a few categories* that are especially pertinent to the time of year and activities going on for the intern (e.g., co-planning, guided lead teaching), and use the questions to remind you of helpful ways to support your intern’s professional learning.
- Target a specific area for discussion at a MT meeting to hear how your colleagues approach mentoring activities such as co-planning, providing written feedback, or problem solving.
- Select an area to explore with your intern to hear the intern’s perspective on how you are providing support.
- Select an area to explore with the field instructor, especially if you want support or have questions about what is expected of you.

MT as a teacher educator and co-learner

- Why have I chosen to work with an intern? How will that influence the opportunities available to support the intern’s learning?
- How am I helping the intern feel comfortable and be a contributing teacher in the class? What do I do in front of students and parents to communicate that my intern is a colleague and co-teacher?
- How am I helping the intern become part of the school community?
- How am I helping parents understand the intern’s important role in the classroom?
- What opportunities do I take advantage of to explain why I make instructional decisions?
- How familiar am I with intern assignments?
- How do I include my intern in professional development opportunities available to me?

- How do I encourage my intern to develop his/her own teaching philosophy and methods?
- How do I work with the field instructor and course instructors to provide complementary support for the intern's learning?
- How do I share ideas with colleagues about ways to improve our mentoring practices?

MT as a communicator

- Have the intern and I set clear expectations for our roles and responsibilities?
- Am I communicating on a daily/weekly basis with my intern? Is there a regular time s/he can count on meeting with me?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses as a communicator? How can I work on improvements?
- What have I done to get to know my intern and build a relationship?
- How do I show an interest in how my intern is progressing and who s/he could become as a teacher?
- Do I address my concerns to the intern in a positive and constructive manner? How do I re-address concerns if they continue?
- In a teaming situation, are all team members communicating well? How am I helping to foster effective communication?
- Do I know where to get support as a CT if a problem arises?

MT as co-planner

- How do I include my intern in planning daily lessons? What are some ways I make room for the intern to contribute ideas and materials?
- Are we setting apart time to meet and co-plan together on a regular basis?
- Are we assembling and discussing materials related to a lesson or unit topic?
- Are we being clear about next steps in the planning process (e.g., how to write up lesson plans)?
- Am I explaining my thinking to my intern?
- Am I asking my intern what s/he needs help with?
- How open am I to new ideas/lessons/materials?
- Am I offering resources that will aid the future development of my intern?

MT as co-teacher

- How comfortable do I feel allowing another teacher to take an active teaching role in the classroom?
- Am I including my intern in daily routines from the beginning of the year?
- How do I allow the intern to take ownership over some of the teaching?
- How are we sharing other responsibilities?
- Have we discussed what each wants to teach and clarified our respective responsibilities?

- Am I remembering to give immediate positive feedback on how to help the intern do things better?
- Am I letting the intern experiment and take risks and learn from them?

Focused observations and debriefing

- Am I giving my intern feedback on a regular basis? In varied subject areas? On varied topics?
- Have my intern and I discussed what type of feedback s/he prefers (e.g., written,, verbal, running commentary, etc.)?
- Are we setting dates/times for observations? Have we discussed the focus of the observation and when we will discuss feedback?
- Is the feedback specific, and either constructive criticism or positive reinforcement?
- Do we discuss the feedback so I am aware of the intern’s perspective?

Providing written feedback

- Am I giving my intern written feedback on a regular basis? In varied subject areas? On varied topics? About all the program standards? Have I tried different formats?
- Once I have tried various formats, have I discussed with my intern which one(s) s/he finds most helpful?
- Do we have conversations about the written feedback?
- Is the feedback specific, and either constructive criticism or positive reinforcement?

Coaching and scaffolding

- Do we talk on a regular basis in order to make clear the reasoning behind the teaching I am modeling?
- Have I allowed time for my intern to observe me teach and ask questions?
- Across the year, has the intern had opportunities to teach and assess all areas of the curriculum?
- Have we discussed how I will “step in” and “step out” of lessons to support the intern as needed? Am I willing to interject ideas when my intern is unsure in parts of a lesson? Have I gradually decreased my involvement based on the intern’s progress and learning needs?
- Am I willing to let my intern direct a lesson while only providing support when needed?
- How am I providing assistance to my intern in those areas where s/he is struggling?
- Do the intern and I set goals regularly for improvement? Do we have specific plans for working toward improvement?

Fostering self-reflection

- Am I encouraging self-reflection as we co-plan and co-teach? Do I ask my intern to discuss what went well (or not) in a lesson? Are we using this process to plan for further learning?
- Am I encouraging self-reflection as the intern takes on increasing responsibility?
- Have we considered using strategies to promote self-reflection (e.g., exchanging a reflection journal)?

Supporting portfolio development

- Am I talking with the intern about activities, lessons, ideas used in the classroom that could be included in the portfolio?
- Am I offering support as a photographer/documenter?
- Have we discussed examples of how the intern's teaching leads to student learning?

Supporting teacher education courses

- Have I attended cluster meetings and communicated with course instructors (if needed) in order to understand the courses?
- Am I familiar with assignments the intern is responsible for?
- Do I show an interest in what takes place during TE courses and seminars?
- Am I talking with my intern about how the course work can integrate into his/her participation in the classroom?
- Do we talk about connections between learning in courses and our work at school?
- Do we talk about and arrange for ways to support the intern's professional development time? Am I flexible in time allowed for professional development?
- Am I supportive of my intern attending seminars?
- Am I supportive of my intern working with his/her field instructor?

Problem solving

- Am I open to others' perspectives and concerns? Am I listening to my intern's point of view?
- Do I communicate regularly with my intern?
- Do we talk openly and honestly about issues? Am I letting my intern know how I feel or am I holding back?
- Have I made sure my intern is aware of my concerns? Am I re-addressing them if they continue?
- Am I making suggestions for alternative ways to handle difficult situations both now and in the future?