

Month One

INTRODUCING THE MENTORING PARTNERS TO THE REFLECTIVE PROCESS

*With an attitude of unassuming modesty
You offer no danger or threat to those around you.
Sincere modesty invites loyal alignment with others.
Do not boast and glare overtly.
Keep the jade and treasures subtly reserved within the bosom.
A posture of a humble heart and genuine respect for the wise
Will bring blessings from all directions.*

*Huang & Lynch,
Mentoring:
The Tao of Giving
and Receiving Wisdom*

INTRODUCTION TO MONTH ONE

The goal for the first month of this mentoring program is to start both the mentor and mentee on the path of developing a collegial relationship directly focused on the critical elements of teaching and student learning. When the mentoring experience is conscientiously grounded in teacher and student learning, the mentoring relationship is much more likely to become a satisfactory learning experience for both partners (Zachary, 2000). Instead of being mentor-driven, with the mentor taking full responsibility for the mentee's learning, the mentee plays a more self-directed role, as both partners share responsibility for the learning priorities, setting, and resources. As the learning team evolves, the mentoring partners also share accountability for achieving goals for professional development.

Dialogue and discussion are the primary skills of the mentoring partnership. This chapter introduces the *Norms of Collaboration* (Garmston, 1999) as the style of communication between the learning partners, so that each may benefit from future dialogue, reflection, and action. These guidelines for productive teamwork prepare the partners to maximize the quality of their learning as they begin to analyze their professional performance related to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards in Month Three.

After learning about the norms and their definitions, the partners begin to apply these practices through a series of get-acquainted exercises. The Norms of Collaboration Inventory (see Activity 1-1) is a self-assessment tool teachers can use to rate their own use of these collaborative discussion techniques.

Weekly Journal and Monthly Summary

The *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* (adapted from Brookfield, 1987) is the foundation for reflection in the mentoring partnership. It is the only required activity to be completed every week throughout the nine-month program. Each partner is responsible for duplicating the *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* sheets (found in the Required Forms Section of Months One through Nine), completing them at the end of the week, and saving them. In Months One and Two, the partners will use the same reflection questions. The journal pages become more specific in Months Three through Seven, as questions are added or revised to reflect the focus of each month's activities.

The *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* activity is also required each month, and is used at the mentor/mentee monthly meetings. Prior to each month's seminar, partners individually summarize their weekly reflections using the form provided. These summaries help the partners observe patterns and themes within both their teaching and the responses of their students. Participants must save the summary sheets each month and use them to complete the goal setting and planning activities in Months Eight and Nine.

Through this process of weekly reflection and monthly summaries, the partners each build a portfolio of their explorations, observations, and analysis of their teaching experiences. This treasure trove of thoughts and ideas provides fuel for the dialogue between the partners, and becomes the raw material from which each will formulate their professional growth plans.

Other Activities

The partners may choose to complete any of the remaining Month One activities that your time and interests permit. Activity 1-2 is an inventory that encourages introspection about the individual's perception as a teacher. The discussion between partners is also a forum for practicing the Norms of Collaboration. The norms worksheet (Activity worksheet 1-1) can be filled out independently or with your partner after completing Activity 1-2. Activity 1-3 asks the partners to reflect on teachers they've had in the past who may serve as role models in their personal and professional lives, and to consider the kind of role models they would like to be for their own students. Once again, the norms inventory can be used before or after this activity. The sentence stems in Activity 1-4 allow partners to get acquainted and to practice the norms in the context of the discussion.

LEARNING TARGETS

- ∞ Respect each other as collaborative partners in education.
- ∞ Practice collaborative skills using the Norms of Collaboration as the communication for professional growth.
- ∞ Use the *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* as the focus of reflection and insights from this month's activities.
- ∞ Analyze the month's reflections and summarize them in writing on the *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* worksheet.

RESOURCES

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MONTH ONE SUPPORT SEMINAR ACTIVITIES

Number	Activity	Completed Date
	REQUIRED ACTIVITIES ∞ Monthly Seminar Planning Form ∞ Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal ∞ Monthly Reflection Journal Summary ∞ Monthly Support Seminar Evaluation	
1-1	Norms of Collaboration (REQUIRED THIS MONTH ONLY) Purpose: To introduce collaborative communication strategies that guide future discussion and meetings Materials: Activity worksheet 1-1, pen/pencil Who: Mentor and/or Mentee and/or seminar participants Time: 20 minutes to individually read and self-assess; 5-10 minutes to discuss	
1-2	Reflection Inventory Purpose: To get acquainted using the prompts and practicing the Norms of Collaboration. Materials: Activity worksheet 1-2, Activity worksheet 1-1, pen/pencil Who: Mentor and Mentee Time: 45 min. – 1 hr.	
1-3	Role Model Profile Purpose: To discuss prior experiences that influence the partners' views of teaching. Materials: Activity worksheet 1-3, Activity worksheet 1-1, pen/pencil Who: Mentor & Mentee Time: 30 min.	
1-4	Partner Interview Purpose: To introduce the partners and allow them to practice the Norms of Collaboration Materials: Activity worksheet 1-4, Activity worksheet 1-1, pen/pencil Who: Mentor & Mentee Time: 30 – 45 min.	

ACTIVITY 1-1

THE SEVEN NORMS OF COLLABORATION

INTRODUCTION: A skill is something that someone knows how to do. A skill becomes a norm when it is “normal” behavior in the group. *The Seven Norms of Collaboration* are constructed from a cognitive coaching model (Costa & Garmston, 1994) for the purpose of creating and sustaining effective working relationships for collective growth. Each norm is deceptively simple, yet requires continued application and refinement to become a normal part of professional communication. Individuals and groups select goals from the seven norms to practice and monitor. Later, they reflect on the how the norms affect the collaborative process for themselves and for the group.

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the descriptions and use the inventory on the next page to assess your use of the skills. Then establish goals for improving your use of the norms, either individually or with your partner. Use the skills to practice, monitor, and reflect upon your goals as you proceed through the activities.

1. **Pause:** It takes from three to five seconds for most people to process high level thoughts; therefore, pausing is essential for critical thinking. Here are some examples:
 - ∞ The speaker allows time for thought after a question or response
 - ∞ Respondents pause before responding to a question or comment
 - ∞ Individuals take time to allow ideas and questions to settle in and to reflect on what they have heard.

2. **Paraphrase:** A well-crafted paraphrase sends the message, “I am trying to understand you – and, therefore, I value what you have to say.” To paraphrase effectively, listen carefully and observe both the content and emotions of the speaker. Signal your intention to paraphrase by using a reflective stem. Some examples of reflective stems:
 - ∞ *You’re suggesting...*
 - ∞ *You’re proposing...*
 - ∞ *So, you are thinking that...*
 - ∞ *So, what you’re wondering is...*
 - ∞ *You’re pondering the effects of...*
 - ∞ *Your hunch is that...*

3. **Probe for specificity:** To identify generalizations, deletions, and distortions, gently probe for specificity when you hear:
 - Vague nouns and pronouns such as “they.”
 - Subjective words such as “improve”, “unmotivated”, “disrupting”, or “hyperactive.”
 - Comparators such as “best”, “slower”, etc. Ask for the criteria used to make the comparison.
 - Rule words: “You shouldn’t”; “We have to”. Probe for the rules behind such statements; ask, “Where is it written?”
4. **Put ideas on the table:** Groups work productively when their members put forward ideas that are supported by data, both qualitative and quantitative. Observations about student learning, school climate, teacher satisfaction, parental attitudes, and the like, are important ideas for mentors and mentees to discuss. While an idea might start as a hunch or intuition, you should seek to support your ideas with evidence. If your ideas change or are influenced by the ideas and data of others, state how you modified your original idea and why.
5. **Pay attention to yourself and others:** Ideas don’t exchange themselves. They are shared by people, each with his or her own goals, moods, and styles of learning and self-expression. Pay careful attention to how your own ideas and emotions, as well of those around you, are affecting the dialogue.
6. **Presume positive intentions:** Honest conversation requires that participants believe in each other’s positive intentions. When you presume that colleagues share your goals for learning and professional growth, you are less likely to interpret their comments as threats or challenges.
7. **Pursue a balance between advocacy and inquiry:** Strive to spend as much time and energy inquiring into the ideas of others as you do in advocating for your own ideas.

ACTIVITY 1-1**NORMS OF COLLABORATION INVENTORY**

Directions: Before your first meeting, rate yourself on each of the norms and their descriptions. Use your data to set goals, either individually or with your partner, to practice the skills in the context of your mentoring relationship. After future meetings, assess your progress in adopting the norms and share your responses with your partners, and with a study group if appropriate, to see how you or your group improved.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Purpose of Meeting: _____

Targeted Goal/s: _____

Norm	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
PAUSING			
◆ I allow time for thought after asking questions or making responses			
◆ I allow time before responding to others			
◆ I wait until others are finished before talking			
PARAPHRASING			
◆ I listen to the content & emotion of the speaker			
◆ I use a variety of reflective stems to summarize and organize the content of the speaker			
◆ I use non-verbal affirmations to signal agreement			
PROBING			
◆ I seek agreement on what words or concepts mean			
◆ I ask questions to clarify facts, ideas and stories			
◆ I ask questions to surface assumptions, points of view, beliefs, values, and rules of individuals and groups			
PUTTING IDEAS ON THE TABLE & PULLING THEM OFF			
◆ I state the intention of my communication			
◆ I reveal all relevant information with supporting facts when they are available			
◆ I explain reasons behind statements, questions and actions			
◆ I remove or announce the modification of my own ideas, opinions, points of view			
PAYING ATTENTION TO SELF & OTHERS			
◆ I maintain awareness of my thoughts and feelings			
◆ I maintain awareness of the group's task, mood and relevance of my own & other's contributions			
PRESUMING POSITIVE INTENTIONS			
◆ I act as if others mean well when responding to and inquiring of others			
◆ I restrain any emotional outbursts			
PURSuing BALANCE BETWEEN ADVOCACY & INQUIRY			
◆ I seek a balance between advocating my own ideas and inquiring into those of others			
◆ I present a rationale for positions, including assumptions, facts, and feelings			
◆ I disagree respectfully and openly with ideas and offer a rationale for my disagreement			
◆ I ask others their reasons for reaching and holding a position			

Adapted from Garmston, (1999)

ACTIVITY 1-2**REFLECTION INVENTORY**

Directions: This activity asks you to think about your role as a teacher. Answer the following questions and share your responses with your partner. Use the Norms of Collaboration (Activity 1-1) to communicate your answers.

1. What am I most proud of in my work as a teacher?
2. What would I like my students to say about me when I'm out of the room?
3. What do I most need to learn about in my teaching?
4. What do I worry most about in my work as a teacher?
5. When do I know I've done good work?
6. What's the mistake I've made that I've learned the most from?

Pick one of these scenarios and take turns discussing what you would do.

1. Imagine a person who had never attended a traditional school decided to become a teacher and came to you asking to see good teaching in action. What would you tell that person to look for during a classroom visit?
2. You are serving on the "Teacher of the Year" award committee. What kinds of teacher actions would you use as the criteria for this award?
3. Think back to the last time you saw something happen that made you say, "This is great teaching." What did you see?

ACTIVITY 1-4**PARTNER INTERVIEW**

Directions: Using the Norms of Collaboration (Activity 1-1), answer and discuss the following prompts with your partner.

1. Provide three pieces of professional information about yourself. . .
2. . . . and two pieces of personal information.
3. Share one thing that you especially enjoy doing, or at which you are particularly successful.
4. How are these things connected to your teaching and to your success in helping students learn?

REQUIRED FORMS SECTION

Monthly Seminar Planning Form

Partners use this form to select which monthly activities each would like to focus on at the monthly seminar. The coordinator collects this form and plans the seminars based on the feedback of participants.

Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal (duplicate as needed)

Each partner completes this form at the end of the week by taking 10 – 15 minutes to answer the reflection prompts. The weekly sheets are saved and used to complete the *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary*.

Monthly Reflection Journal Summary

Each partner completes this form prior to the monthly seminar meeting. The summary is used for dialogue and discussion with partners or groups. This sheet is saved every month.

Monthly Support Seminar Evaluation

Participants complete this form after the monthly support seminars. The coordinator collects and keeps these for ongoing assessment and revision of the mentor program.

MONTHLY SEMINAR PLANNING FORM	
Date	_____
Mentor Name	_____
Mentee Name	_____
Monthly Seminar Topic	_____
I have reviewed this month's suggested activities and would like to focus on the following partner or small group activity:	
Activity Number	_____
Title	_____
Mentee or Mentor Name	_____

WEEKLY TEACHER REFLECTION JOURNAL AND MONTHLY REFLECTION JOURNAL SUMMARY

Notes on Keeping a Teaching Journal:

Keeping a journal of the important events in your life as a teacher is a way to help you realize many things about yourself. Through regular writing and reading in your journal, you'll start to see patterns of thoughts and ideas about teaching. You'll become more aware of your habits and have a clearer understanding of your daily teaching practice. You'll become aware of how you organize your teaching, recognize your teaching strengths, and determine those skills that require more learning and practice. You will identify how your students influence your teaching, and discover ways to adapt, modify, and respond to their behavior to increase their success in the classroom. You will see patterns of emotional highs and lows and begin to identify factors related to them. Eventually, you will use this valuable resource to create a professional growth plan to improve your professional practice. In summary, a teaching journal is a tool that can lead to life-long learning for you, and to greater learning for your pupils.

The *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* is required as a weekly activity and is used throughout the mentor and mentee relationship as a means to ground future discussions and focus attention on the critical elements of teaching and student learning. The ability to reflect consciously on one's style of learning and adapt it to fit changing circumstances is central to the professional growth and development of an excellent teacher (Brookfield, 1987). Therefore, reflection through the *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* is the foundation for the work in each of the months to follow. Month One and Two will use these same four questions; in Months Three through Seven, questions will focus more specifically on the each month's topic.

DIRECTIONS

Spend 15-20 minutes a week writing in your *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal*. Jot down your responses to the questions. These questions will focus on events you experienced and also events based on student responses. You may choose to highlight certain words or note patterns of behavior that help you identify strengths and areas for improvement. These weekly reflections are to be summarized individually on the *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* form prior to the monthly seminar.

When you meet with your partner, bring your *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* to use as a tool to analyze, assess, and reflect on your teaching and its effect on your students. Arrange a time to talk about what you've written. Save the *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* each month; you will use it to set professional development goals and write a plan in Months Eight and Nine. The *Weekly Teacher Reflection Journal* and the *Monthly Reflection Journal Summary* forms are at the end of each month's activities in the Required Forms Section. Feel free to duplicate them as needed.

WEEKLY TEACHER REFLECTION JOURNAL

(Duplicate as needed)

Name:

Date:

1. When did I feel the most connected, engaged, or affirmed as a teacher this week? When did I feel most confident and competent with my skills?

2. When did I feel the most disconnected, disengaged, or discouraged as a teacher this week? When did I doubt my competence and confidence?

3. If I could repeat this week, what would I do differently based on the learning and responses of my students?

4. What am I most proud of this week based on the learning and responses of my students?

5. Other thoughts about this week:

MONTHLY REFLECTION JOURNAL SUMMARY**Introducing the Mentoring Partners to the Reflective Process**

Directions: Look at your current and previous responses to the prompts in your weekly reflection journal. Use a highlighter to find themes or patterns to your responses about each question. Summarize your entries under each of the prompts. Save this sheet!

1. Summarize the situations where you felt the most connected, engaged, or affirmed as a teacher this month. Summarize situations where you felt the most confident and competent.

Connected, Engaged, Affirmed	Confident and Competent with Skills

2. Summarize the situations where you felt the most disconnected, disengaged, or discouraged as a teacher this month. Summarize when you doubted your competence and confidence.

Disconnected, Disengaged, Discouraged	Not Confident and Competent with Skills

3. Summarize what you would do differently based on student learning and responses for the month.

Student Learning and Responses	What I'd Do Differently

4. Summarize what you are most proud of this month based on student learning and responses.

Student Learning and Responses	What I'm most proud of

MONTHLY SUPPORT SEMINAR EVALUATION
MONTH/TOPIC:

1. List the activity you chose to focus on this month:

2. List the learning partner(s) you worked with to complete this activity:

3. What was the most important thing you learned about this month's topic?

4. How has this month's activity influenced your classroom teaching?

5. What other monthly activities included in this chapter do you plan to complete?

6. What data will you collect as a result of this month's activity?

7. What suggestions do you have for improving the monthly seminars?