Louisiana Department of Education
Mentor Teacher Training

Module 9:
Difficult Conversations, Troubleshooting, Consultancy, Mentor Mindsets, and Review

All Cohorts

Facilitated by Learning Forward

Mentor Training Goals

1. Build strong relationships with their new and resident teachers.
2. Use quantitative data (i.e. student achievement results from summative and formative assessments) and qualitative data (i.e. student work and feedback, classroom observations, peer and supervisor feedback) to identify and prioritize new and resident teacher's strengths and areas for growth based on teacher **certification competencies and performance expectations**.
3. Implement a continuum of support and mentoring techniques to build new and resident teacher knowledge and skill in content and content-specific pedagogy and self-analysis and reflection skills.
    - Set short- and long-term professional growth goals based on student results.
    - Create a logical sequence of mentoring opportunities to build new/resident teacher's skill over time to reach goals.
    - Identify and leverage high-quality, evidence-based resources to support new and resident teachers' specific needs.
    - Lead effective feedback/mentoring conversations grounded in student evidence (includes difficult conversations).
    - Track new and resident teacher progress.
    - Model and facilitate resident self-reflection and improvement.
4. Deepen content knowledge and content-specific pedagogy to support continued development of teacher competencies in the respective content areas.
5. Assess and develop mentor competencies in their discipline to identify strengths and gaps and to develop areas of need. These assessments are based on competencies and student results.

Module 9 Outcomes

Mentor teachers will:

1. Acquire skills and protocols for handling difficult conversations with residents, colleagues, and others.
2. Identify and address challenges related to their work as mentors using the Mentoring Consultancy Protocol.
3. Apply the mindsets research to a mentor's mindset about a resident's ability to grow and learn and to capacity to serve as a mentor and leader within their schools.
4. Summarize the content of the Mentor Training course to identify what they are taking back to their schools and districts and to advocate for opportunities to serve as leaders to support both teacher and student learning.

Module 9 Key Points

- Mentors use protocols and processes to address challenges they encounter as mentors with their residents, colleagues, or others.
- Mentors are capable of planning and holding difficult conversations with their residents.
- Mentors are more proactive than reactive in their work with residents.
- Mentors bring back to their schools and districts a wealth of resources and learnings and advocate for opportunities to serve as leaders within their schools and districts.

Module 9 Agenda

8:30-12:00

- Overviewing outcomes and agreements
- Reviewing assignments
- Handling difficult conversations
- Troubleshooting
- Implementing the Consultancy Protocol

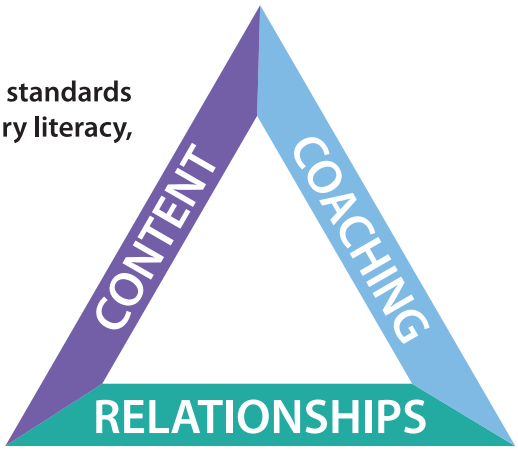
12:45-4:00

- Summarizing Mentor Training Course
- Advocating for opportunities to lead and serve
- Celebrating
- Wrapping-up/Evaluation

Agreements

- **M**ake the learning meaningful
- **E**ngage mentally and physically
- **N**otice opportunities to support the learning of others
- **T**ake responsibility for your own learning
- **O**wn the outcomes
- **R**espect the learning environment and the use of personal technology

- Student content-area standards (ELA, math, disciplinary literacy, other disciplines)
- State curriculum
- Teacher-preparation competencies
- Effective instruction



- Mentor distinction criteria
- Roles and responsibilities
- Coaching supports
- Coaching cycle
  - Assessing
  - Goal setting
  - Observing
  - Conferring
- Gradual release

- Partnership agreements
- Trust
- Growth-oriented (difficult) conversations
- Handling stress

Module 8 Assignment Review:

1. Which Teacher Preparation Competencies are your strongest? Share how they became a strength.

2. Which Teacher Preparation Competencies are ones you want to continue to stretch? Explain your reasons for wanting to continue to grow in these areas.

3. Which competencies are "new" for you, meaning ones that were not included in or for which you had insufficient preparation in your teacher preparation program, yet you have acquired from your experience in the classroom? Share your plan for growing in these areas?

4. Explain how your deep understanding of these competencies will help you be a better mentor.

Difficult/Opportunity Conversations

Guiding questions:

1. What is a difficult/opportunity conversation?
2. What kinds of topics might be difficult for mentors to talk about and with whom?
3. How do mentors prepare for a difficult/opportunity conversation?
4. What process can mentors use to structure difficult/opportunity conversations?
5. How are my views about difficult /opportunity conversations changing as I learn more about how to engage in them?

Difficult conversations are . . .

those you'd rather not have because they are uncomfortable.

Name some related to mentoring a resident teacher.

With whom	**Topics**
Resident teacher	
Colleagues	
Principal	
University supervisor	

Why bother?

Difficult conversations are opportunities for:

1. Speaking your truth contributes to an environment of trust.
2. Expressing your concerns reduces your level of stress.
3. Saying what's on your mind increases your sense of personal efficacy.
4. Addressing issues when they arise builds and maintains a productive, trusting relationship.

"Opportunity" Conversation Protocol 1

Use this protocol when there is a specific, uncomfortable, yet necessary issue to address between individuals.

1. Prepare mentally.
   a. Reframe your thinking.
   b. Consider what your interests are.
   c. Consider the other person's interests.
2. Identify the issue or situation.
   a. Name the issue.
   b. Consider if it is your issue alone or if you both share responsibility.
   c. Clarify if addressing it is likely to alleviate or prevent future issues.
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change.
   a. Give one specific example.
   b. State it neutrally without interpretation, assumptions, or judgment.
4. Describe your feelings about the issue.
   a. Name your response.
   b. Own that it is yours.
5. Clarify what is at stake.
   a. State the potential immediate and long-term consequences.
   b. State them neutrally and clearly.
6. Identify your contribution to this situation.
   a. Own responsibility for contributing to the situation.
   b. Name how you contributed.
7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.
   a. Be truthful.
   b. Name what is at stake for you if the situation is not resolved.
8. Invite the other person to respond.
   a. Listen fully and without interruption.
   b. Paraphrase to demonstrate understanding.
   c. Probe if necessary, although silence, acceptance, and acknowledgement may be best.
9. Plan next actions together.
   a. Be clear on the criteria for moving forward.
   b. Generate possible next actions together.
   c. Choose the action(s) that most closely meet the criteria.
   d. Seek agreement and commitment to implement the action(s), even if temporarily.
10. Set a time to revisit.
    a. Come back to review how things are going.
    b. Listen and assess viability of continuing or if new agreements must be reached.

"Opportunity" Conversation Example

Step	Example
1. Prepare mentally.	Internally I feel confident and say, "I am ready. This is important to do because it influences our relationship. I want to be successful as a mentor and contribute to building the capacity of my resident. I want my resident to be successful in this part of the preparation program and as a teacher. I can see the issue from both perspectives. I understand that we have different styles and that my resident brings new practices that I don't currently use. I realize that my resident may think I am set in my ways or even not up-to-date in my practice. I acknowledge that I share responsibility for the situation. I don't have the whole story. I am committed to making this situation better."
2. Identify the issue or situation.	"John, I feel that you regard my work as your mentor as unhelpful to you and disrespect me as a professional. Talking about this now will help us moving forward."
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change.	"Here's one example of what makes me feel this way. When I offered suggestions to you during our last reflection conversation, you identified reasons why the suggestions would not work for you. I might be misinterpreting your response."
4. Describe your feelings about the issue.	"That response made me feel as if you devalue my ideas and possibly even disagree with or disrespect my teaching practices."
5. Clarify what is at stake.	"To continue to work together as mentor and resident, it's important to me that you respect and value my experience and that we both contribute to the success of teaching and learning in the classroom we share."
6. Identify your contribution to this situation.	"I share responsibility for this situation. I haven't taken enough time to understand fully what you expect in your own classroom and what you want as a teacher. I haven't asked about your vision of success as a teacher. I also haven't asked you for your views of my teaching practice. I just assumed you agreed with them."
7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.	"I look forward to working this out with you because I appreciate your commitment to student success. I want you to become an effective teacher, and I want to be a successful mentor who has the opportunity to give back to the profession."
8. Invite the other person to respond.	"I am interested in hearing your perspectives about this situation. Please tell me what you think."
9. Plan next actions together.	"Let's talk about some ways to address this situation. … "I will commit to listen more and to be less dogmatic in giving suggestions. I will also seek your ideas before offering mine."
10. Set a time to revisit.	"I'd like to take a few minutes to review how we are each feeling about what we agreed to do and how it is working for both of us in two weeks."

Your Turn: Plan an "Opportunity" Conversation

Choose an authentic focus for your practice conversation so this experience is useful to you. You might want to think about a conversation you have been meaning to have with a colleague, friend, or someone else.

Step	Notes
1. Prepare mentally. How do you know you are ready?	
2. Identify the issue or situation.	
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change.	
4. Describe your feelings about the issue.	
5. Clarify what is at stake.	
6. Identify your contribution to this situation.	
7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.	
8. Invite the other person to respond.	
9. Plan next actions together.	
10. Set a time to revisit.	

Provide input to speaker on use of

- ✓ Neutral language
- ✓ Positive tone
- ✓ Positive presupposition
- ✓ Sincerity

Addressing a Conflicting/Difficult Issue Protocol 2

Use this open-ended protocol with an individual or within a team when there is are differences in perspectives about, proposed actions for, approaches to, etc. a situation that requires cooperation. It is less structured and leaves the results wide open to the individuals or team to generate. It requires all parties to engage actively in finding an appropriate resolution.

1. What are the core issues about which we have differing views?	
2. How will the final decision to resolve our differences be made?	
3. On a continuum representing student needs at one end and teacher needs at the other, where do our current practices fit?	
4. What assumptions and information are currently influencing our thinking?	
5. What additional information do we need?	
6. What does each of us need in order to feel that our issues have been acknowledged and addressed?	
7. How is our conversation about these issues honoring our feelings, as well as our substantive needs?	

Reflection on "Opportunity" Conversations

What have I learned about difficult conversations?

How are my views about difficult/opportunity conversations changing as I learn more about how to engage in them?

Based on what you learned, rate on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high) the following:

_____ My understanding of how to hold opportunity conversations.

_____ My willingness to have opportunity conversations.

_____ My comfort with opportunity conversations.

_____ My understanding of the necessity for opportunity conversations.

Troubleshooting

Guiding questions:

1. What can and does go wrong in mentoring?
2. How do I manage my worry and stress about potential problems?
3. How can anticipating challenges better prepare me for addressing them when they do occur?
4. How can I address common challenges in mentoring?

Inevitably things will go wrong at some point. Anticipating problems and planning for them before they happen build confidence and comfort in being prepared to address them.

Review the challenges that coaches/mentors often face in Chapter 19 of *Taking the Lead*. As you skim through the list of challenges identified in the chapter, note which ones have or may occur for you. After you have read through the entire list of challenges and noted several, go back and read through the suggestions for addressing at least two of the challenges. Be ready to talk with a partner about:

1. the challenges you selected;
2. your reason for selecting them;
3. what the authors suggests you do;
4. how those suggestions fit your particular circumstance; and
5. what else you might do.

Mentoring Consultancy Protocol for Providing Support

adapted from Consultancy Protocol [www.nsrf.org]

Jot down several authentic issues you are facing regarding mentoring or several about which you worry. Jot some of your thoughts about the issues.

Issues	What makes it a challenge	Notes

Choose one issue about which to seek help from your colleagues.

Mentoring Consultancy Protocol Process

- Form triads.
- Use the protocol to address an authentic challenge, task, or responsibility, etc.
- Review agreements:
    - Use inquiry and wonder rather than advice giving and rescuing.
    - Listen to understand.
    - Consider multiple perspectives.
    - Maintain confidentiality.
- Identify who will take which role in each round—presenter, timekeeper, and facilitator.

5 minutes	The presenter describes the issue, challenge, task, or responsibility he/she wants to address; provides background information that will help the partners understand the situation; and explains what he/she has done so far. Consider using only first names or pseudonyms instead of real names in the description of the situation. Presenter uses facts rather than opinions when presenting.
3 minutes	Partners ask clarifying questions so that they understand the situation more thoroughly and presenter answers them with facts.
1 minute	Presenter tells partners what kind of help s/he wants. For example, the presenter might want to think about how another person might perceive the situation; consider different ways to think about the situation; explore his/her feelings about the situation; consider what options might be available; assess the situation; determine what steps to take; etc.
5 minutes	Presenter remains silent while the partners "probe the presenter's thinking" related to the requested area(s) of help. Authentic probes are designed to cause the presenter to consider different perspectives, his or her assumptions or beliefs, emotions, criteria for success, ways of thinking about the situation, and exploring the situation in more depth. They are not disguised advice. They might be framed as "I wonder" statements or as questions that will not be answered now yet are posed for future consideration. The presenter listens rather than answers the probes.
1 minute	The presenter shares what he or she is thinking about, what is helpful to consider, etc. the situation after listening to the partners' probes.

Debrief after all three rounds are completed (8 minutes):

- Take one minute to jot some notes about the value of the Mentoring/Mentoring Consultancy Protocol to you.
    - What did you learn?
    - How was the process helpful to you?
    - How might you use this process in your work as a Mentor?
- Share your thoughts with each other.

Mentor's Mindset (based on Carol Dweck's work)

Guiding question:

- How does a mentor's mindset about residents and self influence a mentor's ability to mentor?

Mentor's Mindset Toward Residents (Adapted from: *The Skillful Team Leader*. Elisa Macdonald.)

	Belief	A Mentor might sound like	A mentor's actions might look like
Fixed	Mentor believes some residents do not have the capacity to learn and develop into highly effective teachers. There is a limit to his or her teaching abilities.	A mentor hears a teacher make a negative assumption about students and does not respond because she believes this teacher will never change.	• Avoids difficult conversations. • Exerts minimal effort in trying to help resident succeed. • Interprets feedback on her mentoring as a personal attack. • Downplays or discredits other mentors who have success with residents.
Growth	Mentor believes every resident has the capacity to learn and develop into a highly effective teacher. There is no limit to his or her teaching abilities.	A mentor hears a resident make a negative assumption about students and investigates the assumption without judgment. She might say, "I am curious to learn more about what you mean when you make that statement." "What has informed your thinking?" "What positive or negative effects might this assumption have on our actions towards students?"	• Eager to lead all residents in learning. • Persists with unrelenting effort to help all residents. • Invites constructive feedback about her mentoring. • Is inspired by other mentors' successes and seeks to learn from them.

Mentor's Mindset Toward Self

	Belief	A mentor might sound like	A mentor's actions might look like
Fixed	Mentor believes he is incapable of learning how to mentor better than he already is. There is a limit to his or her mentoring abilities and he is already finished product.	A conflict breaks out between the resident and the mentor. The mentor says to a colleague, "No matter what, I will never be able to effectively mentor this person."	• Shuts down when hurdles arise. • Avoids putting too much effort into mentoring. • Disregards feedback from the resident or others about his mentoring. • Is threatened by the success of other mentors.
Growth	Mentor believes he is capable of learning how to mentor more effectively with effort and practice. There is no limit to his mentoring capabilities.	A conflict breaks out between the resident and the mentor. The mentor says to the resident, "I realize that the conflict between my resident and me prevent us both from reaching our desired outcomes. Share with me some reasons you think this happened and what I can do as your mentor to assist us next time we face a similar situation. What will help us function better as a team to ensure you become the best teacher you can be?"	• Learns from hurdles. • Puts in effort to improve own leadership. • Invites constructive feedback. • Is inspired by effective team leaders and their practices.

Mentor Training Course Review

Guiding questions:

1. What have I learned over the last five months about effective mentoring and my responsibilities as a mentor?
2. How can I communicate what I have learned to others?
3. How can I use what I have learned to advocate for more opportunities to serve as a mentor and leader?

In the envelope are three resources—a sheet with the overarching Mentor Training Course goals, a list of each module's title; and each module's outcomes presented on strips of paper.

- Place the goal sheet in the center of the table.
- Divide the outcome strips among your team members. Each team member puts his or her initials on the strips s/he receives.
- Jot a few notes on each strip about what you recall related to each outcome.
- After each member has made a few notes on his/her strips, team members can ask for help from others to get additional information.
- Sort the outcomes into groups by the overarching goals.
- For each goal, share the outcomes and information team members wrote about each and invite others to make any additions.
- Create a visual representation of your learning on a piece of chart paper.

Advocating Leadership Opportunities: Top Ten Learnings

Consider the many opportunities you have had to stretch and grow in the Mentor Training Course. As you complete this training and assume your rightful status as an esteemed mentor and leader within your school and district, how you advocate for opportunities to influence teaching and learning matters. What are you now able to offer your students, residents, peers, administrators, and community members? How can you influence the quality of teaching and learning Louisiana students experience? How can you contribute to the professional of teaching?

Create a document or presentation that identifies the top ten learnings that you are bringing back to your school or district to benefit students, colleagues, administrators, and the entire school community. The goal is to be as specific as possible so that people will know what to seek from you. You want them to understand how you add value when given an opportunity to contribute. And, you want them to give you multiple opportunities because they recognize you as a genuine asset. The doors of opportunity open when you can delineate your strengths, speak to identified needs, and speak clearly and articulately about how you can add value.

You have several options for completing this task.

1. Make a list of the Top Ten Learnings you are bringing back in reverse order of importance.
2. Draft a brochure of at least 10 services you can offer to your school community. Choose a specific audience to address with your brochure.
3. Use the *I Used to Be* poem (see next page) to create your own poem that expresses ten ways you have changed or refined who you are as a mentor and leader.
4. Create a mentor resume that specifies your goals, assets, and at least 10 different qualifications you can contribute if you are “hired.”
5. A presentation (Vimeo, movie, narrated slides, Prezi, or some other technology app) to communicate the 10 qualifications or learnings you can contribute.

I Used to Be but Now I Am

Ted Berrigan

The Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan. © University of California Press, 2005. From G. Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac*

I used to be inexorable,
But now I am elusive.

I used to be the future of America,
But now I am America.

I used to be part of the problem,
But now I am the problem.

I used to be part of the solution, if not all of it,
But now I am not that person.

I used to be intense, & useful,
But now I am heavy, & boring.

I used to be sentimental about myself, & therefore ruthless,
But now I am, I think, a sympathetic person, although
easily amused.

I used to be a believer,
But now, alas, I believe.

Final Assignments

1. Share what you learned with others who are interested in participating in the Mentor Training Course.
2. Schedule a meeting with your supervisor to talk about the Mentor Training Course and your participation in it. Take the visual representation of your learning and your Top Ten to the meeting as a reference to describe the scope of what you learned and how you can contribute to effective teaching and learning within your school and/or district. Boldly ask for opportunities to share what you have learned and use it to support continuous learning within your school and district so increasingly more Louisiana students achieve success. Share the results of your meeting electronically with your learning team members prior to the end of the school year. (Yes, please stay in touch!).

Final Word

How do you view your role as a mentor now?

> Fromm, E. (1956). *The art of loving*. New York: Harper and Rowe.
> While we teach knowledge, we are losing that teaching which is the most important one for human development: the teaching which can only be given by the simple presence of a mature, loving person. In previous epochs, . . . the teacher was not only, or even primarily, a source of information, but his function was to convey certain human attitudes (p, 117).
>
> What does one person give to another? He gives of himself, of the most precious he has, he gives of his life. . . . [H]e gives him of that which is alive in him; he gives him of his joy, of his interest, of his understanding, of his knowledge, of his human, of his sadness—of all expressions and manifestations of that which is alive in him. In thus giving of his life, he enriches the other person, he enhances the other's sense of aliveness. He does not give in order to receive; giving is in itself exquisite joy. But in giving he cannot help bringing something to life in the other person and this which is brought to life reflects back to him; in truly giving, he cannot help receiving that which is given back to him. . . . In the act of giving something is born, and both persons involved are grateful for the life that is born for both of them. (pp. 24-25).

Complete the Module 9 survey at
http://www.utdanacenter.org/ldoe-surveys/