OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ongoing Mentor Professional Learning
Activity – Mentor/Admin Conversation Guide (CG) Tool

Purpose
To familiarize mentors with and provide practice using the Mentor-Admin CG while practicing a mentor-admin conversation

Materials
Blank copies of Mentor-Admin Conversation Guide Tool
Tool directions/guidelines Handout
Practice Observation Guide

Equipment (for in-person)
Computer, Projector, Speakers

Facilitator Notes
The Mentor-Admin Conversation Guide is a tool used to guide reflective, informative, non-evaluative conversations between mentors and administrators of beginning teachers that also respect and maintain the confidential nature of the Mentor-BT relationship.

Ongoing communication between the mentor and the beginning teacher's administrator are a crucial part of a comprehensive induction program, one that supports the development of beginning teachers through aligned and coordinated supports from the mentoring program, building, and district personnel and resources. Mentoring alone will not be as effective. Through regular communication, the mentor and site administrator become partners in supporting the success and development of the beginning teacher and his/her students.

While maintaining confidentiality, mentors should meet regularly with the BT's administrator in order to:
- Keep the site administrator apprised of the areas of support the mentor and mentor program is focused on proving the BT,
- Invite the site administrator to share information on building goals and areas of focus,
- Ask the site administrator to share successes and suggest areas to focus support with BT,
- Identify resources and next steps for supporting the BT.

Process/Steps
1. Ask participants to review the Mentor-Admin CG Tool and Use Guide on their own for a few minutes.
2. Invite any questions or comments as a whole group.
3. Ask participants to use a blank CG and the Practice Guide to while practicing (role play) a scenario from their current experience.

Based on models of Cognitive Coaching from Costa and Garmston, Collaborative Coaching from West Ed, and Appreciative Inquiry from https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/ as adapted by TeachOntario Canada in Mentoring for All, and New Teacher Center CAL, 2016

4. Forming triads, each participant will take a turn practicing a mentor-administrator conversation as the mentor, while the other two act as the principal and observer.

5. In Table Groups, (or online whole group share out) compare how you filled out the CG with one another.
   - What parts of the conversation were effective?
   - What was challenging?

Handout

Mentor-Administrator Conversation Guide Tool: Guidelines for Use

The Mentor-Admin Conversation Guide is a tool used to guide reflective, informative, non-evaluative conversations between mentors and administrators of beginning teachers that also respect and maintain the confidential nature of the Mentor-BT relationship.

Similar to the Mentor-BT Collaborative Discussion Guide (CDG), the CG Tool always begins with an examination of what is working well in current practice (themes of success). Many of these themes can then be applied as actual strategies to collaboratively address specific challenges and issues.

It is important to consider the complex job of the administrator in balancing support for beginning teachers with ensuring the highest quality learning opportunities for students.

Before the Conversation

Remember that the mentor should be the one using the tool, filling it out while the Administrator has the freedom to think and share. Be sure you are listening well as you document the Administrator's thoughts, ideas, questions, needs in each of the 4 boxes. Remember to use your Mentor Language Stems to help guide your conversation.

- Make sure you are familiar with your program's goals and procedures for building strong partnerships with the BTs' site administrators, and expectations and protocols for confidentiality. Review the building and district goals and areas of focus for professional learning for the year.
- Be prepared that the administrator may ask potentially evaluative questions during the meeting (or anytime you informally run into them.) For example, they may simply ask you, "How is (BT) doing?" You should be prepared to respond both non-evaluatively (no judgement!) and confidentially. For example, you might say, "I am currently focusing on (i.e. lesson planning, classroom management, student engagement) with the BT's in your building." Keep a positive stance even if the administrator continues to press you for evaluative or judgmental feedback about your BT, and suggest that using the Conversation Guide will help you both support your BT for success.
- Plan ahead what to share and what to ask the site administrator. Use these possible topics as guidelines:
  - o Building/District Goals
  - o Induction and mentoring program goals/expectations
  - o Current work focus
  - o Family Communication
  - o Evaluation procedures
  - o Collegial collaboration
  - o Assessment
  - o Professional development and other resources available
  - o Important dates/events (i.e. parent conferences, report cards, family nights, etc.)
  - o Students' needs (behavior and/or learning)

Beginning the Conversation: Themes of Success

Successes: What's already working well?

   Often in our practice we can focus on what is not working –creating time for paired conversations about what is working well can help bring to the fore the strengths and attributes of beginning teachers, as well as highlighting the successes they've experienced in the year. Following this segment of the conversation, mentors may note common threads or themes that ran through the administrator's stories of the BT's success. Some of these "themes of success" may actually provide useful strategies for the challenges and issues the BT may encounter.

1. Thank the administrator for clearing time to meet with you.
2. Share the topic(s) you'd like to cover and ask the administrator what they would like to share and learn.
3. Begin the Conversation with asking the principal to share the BT's current successes. (Box 1)
4. Share the current area(s) of focus with your BT(s). (Box 2)

Continuing the Conversation: Issues and Challenges

Focus: What's not working so well? What are your challenges/concerns?

   Acknowledging the "real world" challenges both new and experienced colleagues encounter in their work brings authenticity to the process. As the listener in the conversation, it is important for mentors to remember their role is non-evaluative and supportive. Sometimes, the administrator also needs to feel supported in their work with helping beginning teachers grow and develop, while also wanting rapid growth to promote student learning.

1. Ask the administrator to share areas he/she suggests you focus on in your work with the BT. (Box 3)
2. Ask for some specific reasons, observations, and evidence for these suggestions.
3. Brainstorm together what supports and resources you and the administrator can provide to support the BT's growth in the suggested focus areas. This is an invitation to problem solve collaboratively.

Concluding the Conversation: Practical Ideas and Next Steps

Mentor's Next Steps and Support needed from Administrator: collaborative harvesting of ideas

   Often when someone expresses a challenge they have already given the issue a great deal of prior thought.

For mentors, awareness of flexibility of stance and role is critical at this point of the process. Based on what they are hearing from the administrator, mentors may decide to:
• Consult (offer support and resources)
• Collaborate (create challenge and encourage growth)
• Coach (facilitate professional vision)

1. Identify the support needed for the BT's growth
2. List and review the Mentor's Next Steps (Box 4)
3. List and review the administrator's Next Steps (Box 4)
4. Schedule the next meeting

5. Thank the administrator again for their time, and for the support, they provide to the BT(s), students, the mentoring program, and you.

After the Conversation
What was the emphasis of the conversation?

Although the CDG Tool is confidential between the mentor and beginning teacher, the Mentor-Administrator Conversation Guide Tool may not be. You should determine ahead of time with the site administrator if they wish the tool to remain confidential or shared with the BT. However, you should both consider that neither of you should be sharing confidential information about the BT with one another that you wouldn't share with the BT. In particular, if the administrator has concerns, these should have been shared by the administrator with the BT, and not come as a surprise when discussed by the mentor.

The CG Tool serves to document and organize your work together, and provides a tool to reflect on progress during the year. The tool is NOT evaluative. However, many mentors, coaches, and beginning teachers find it helpful to note how their work aligns with and supports the district's professional teaching standards.

Next meeting date?

Be sure to follow up on the things you and the administrator agreed to do in the Next Steps boxes. Give the administrator a copy (or email) of the completed CG for their records/reflection. Stick to the next meeting date as much as possible.

Administrator/Mentor Conversation Guide

Date: _____ **School:** _____

Name of Administrator: _____ **Mentor:** _____

Beginning Teacher (s) discussed: _____

Ask Admin to share BT's current successes in work:	Share the current area(s) of focus of your work with BT(s):
Ask Admin to share area(s) he/she suggest focus on and what supports/resources school/district can provide:	Ask Admin what suggestion he/she has for Mentor's Next Steps working with BT(s)

Provide a copy of this document to the administrator, and set next date for conversation.

![Oregon Department of Education logo]

SAMPLE
Administrator/Mentor Conversation Guide

Date: 12-8-17　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**School: Crestline Elementary**

Name of Administrator: Mrs. Smith　　　　　**Mentor: R. McDonald**

Beginning Teacher (s) discussed:　John Applegate

Ask Admin to share BT's current successes in work:	Share the current area(s) of focus of your work with BT(s):
1. John has excellent rapport with students, colleagues and parents. 2. John collaborated with his grade level team to design and implement a STEM Project Based Learning unit. 3. STAR assessments in reading and math showing his students are making progress in both. 4. John contributes to the positive school environment, volunteers for committees.	1. The mentor program's current focus is on analyzing student work to plan instruction. 2. Our monthly seminars reinforce equity and cultural responsiveness. 3. Looking at formative and summative assessments and working with BT's on using the data to differentiate instruction for all students. 4. Supporting BT in the school's focus on Project Based Learning with resources and co-lesson/unit planning.
Ask Admin to share area(s) he/she suggest focus on and what supports/resources school/district can provide:	**Ask Admin what suggestion he/she has for Mentor's Next Steps working with BT(s)**
1. Keeping John on track with all the new curriculum and technology, we are rolling out this year. Even veteran teachers are feeling overwhelmed! 2. Support for report cards and written comments. 3. Making sure differentiation addresses IEP students' IEP goals. 4. Guide John not to volunteer for too much so he does not get overwhelmed.	1. Mentor attend new curriculum trainings in order to be familiar with enough to support. 2. Mentor to provide examples of report card comments to John. 3. Review John's IEP students' goals with him and target differentiation to those goals. 4. Moral support and encourage John to take time for self-care.

Provide a copy of this document to the administrator, and set next date for conversation.