

High Leverage Instructional Practices in Mentoring Research Brief-June 2019 Oregon Mentoring Program

The goal of the Oregon Mentoring Program (OMP) is to support beginning teachers and administrators, who are defined as those being in their first two years on the job. The OMP requires mentors to spend a total of 75-90 hours with their mentees during the school year. One of the goals of the OMP is to improve instructional and leadership practices in beginning educators. Mentors utilize mentoring tools, provide strategies and facilitate meaningful conversations with mentees on implementing effective instructional or leadership practices. “High Leverage Practices (HLP’s) is an example of a strategy that can be integrated into core instruction in the classroom setting. Mentors work with mentees to intentionally design, deliver, and assess instruction that leads to equitable learning outcomes for *all* students with diverse learning needs.”¹

#1 Increase retention of beginning teachers & administrators

#2 Improve instructional & leadership practices

#3 Increase student learning & growth

What are High Leverage Practices?

HLPs are a set of 22 intentional practices that support student learning in the K-12 classroom setting. These practices are taught, learned and implemented by teachers. The primary focus is on instructional practices, the frequency in which they occur, and whether they foster student engagement and learning. As teachers learn, apply and implement these practices their efficiency will increase over time. HLPs are not meant to replace teaching content using evidence-based practices, but rather to increase the intentionality of the instruction. Using HLPs simultaneously with evidence-based practices can improve student learning outcomes and improve a teacher’s effectiveness to teach a lesson.²

HLPs are organized around four aspects of practice:

1. Collaboration
2. Assessment
3. Social/emotional/behavioral
4. Instruction

High Leverage Practices (HLPs), can be implemented in any education setting. This brief will include research on all (HLP’s) and their impact on student learning in the area of instructional practices.³ This brief will focus on four of the HLPs in more depth.

Mentoring Program

Standard #7

Instructional and Leadership

Practices: Quality mentor programs accelerate the professional practice of beginning educators to positively impact student achievement for EACH and EVERY learner no matter what their national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, first language, or other distinguishing characteristic.

Criteria for High Leverage Practice Development⁴

1	Focus directly on instructional practice.
2	Occur with high frequency in teaching.
3	Research based and known to foster student engagement and learning.
4	Broadly applicable and can be integrated into any content area or approach to teaching.
5	Fidelity to implementation is critical for effective teaching.

Using High Leverage Practices in Mentoring

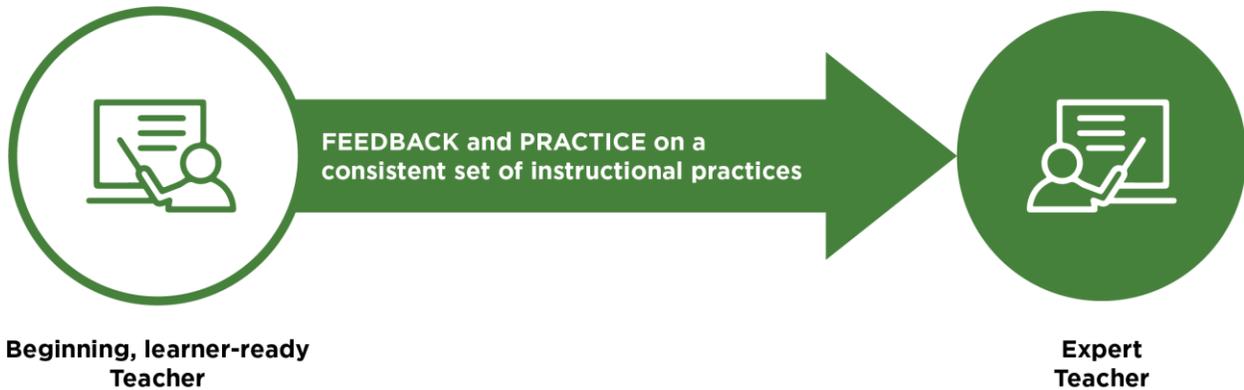
Mentoring programs are implementing high leverage practice strategies for all beginning teachers. Mentoring provides an opportunity for beginning teachers to build a solid foundation of skills when it comes to instructional practices. Programs have found that beginning teachers are more engaged in the process of joint inquiry with their mentor. Mentors are helping beginning teachers understand the importance of learning from practice while providing tools that are useful for planning lessons. Mentors use observations, feedback and analysis of student work to guide reflective conversations with their mentee. When mentors establish consistent expectations of instructional practices and beginning teachers are provided multiple opportunities to practice instructional strategies they move from being novice to experts in instructional practices. High Leverage Practices provides a framework in which teachers learn how to differentiate instruction for “all students including those with disabilities, learning differences, and language barriers”.⁴

Mentoring and High Leverage Practices (HLPs)

HLPs are the foundation for mentoring and induction programs as an instructional framework that mentors can use to support beginning teachers effectively. Coaching processes that mentors implement can be combined with HLP content. The four HLPs listed below were selected because they are essential for effective core instruction, backed by a strong body of research and, when used together, lessons are created with intentionality and structured to address students’ needs within core instruction.⁵

“My mentor has helped me with classroom management strategies and organizational skills that have facilitated my success in my first years of teaching.” (BT, 2019)

How Mentoring Can Support Beginning Teachers to Become Effective Teachers

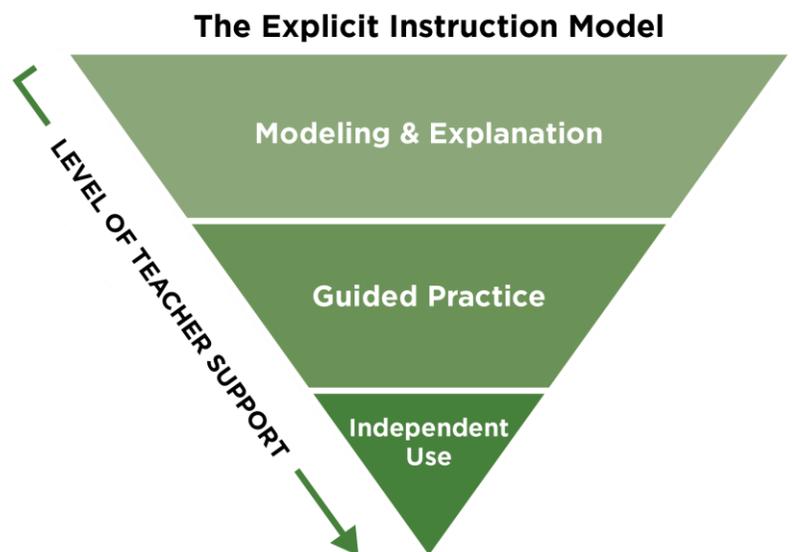


Use Explicit Instruction (HLP #16)

This HLP involves overtly teaching steps or processes needed to understand a construct, apply a strategy, or complete a task. In this practice, it is critical that multiple opportunities for modeling and practice with fading supports are provided. Mentors work with mentees to make connections to each student's prior knowledge and skills. They focus instruction on steps that lead to a new knowledge or skill through the use of systematic scaffolding.

Some Essential Components of Explicit Instruction include:

- Direct instruction of new skills or concepts
- Teacher modeling
- Concrete examples and visuals
- Clarity of language and purpose
- Gradual release of responsibility
- Immediate corrective feedback



Example of Mentor/Mentee Interaction

Using the Mentor Tool: The Roles and Stances of an Effective Mentor
Consulting/Collaborating/Coaching (The 3 Cs) ¹

Consulting:

- The mentor as the consultant offers support and provides resources.
- Mentor shares key information about logistics, school culture, students, curriculum, and teaching practices and provides an explanation of the why, what, and how of their thinking.

“She has taught me instructional techniques and lesson strategies that have helped me increase student learning” (BT,2019)

Collaborating:

- The mentor as the collaborator challenges and encourages mentee growth.
- Mentor and beginning teacher “co-develop strategies and approaches with an equal pattern of interaction in producing ideas.”

Coaching:

- The mentor as the coach facilitates professional vision.
- Mentor supports the beginning teacher’s internal idea production through inquiry and paraphrase and aims to develop the beginning teacher’s internal resources for self-coaching and independence.
- Mentor models an instructional strategy with mentee, mentor and mentee works together on how to develop lesson that implements modeled instructional strategy, then the mentee then teaches the lesson and implementing newly learned instructional strategy with the mentor providing feedback.

Beginning teachers and **beginning teacher mentors** were asked about the *effectiveness of the time spent together toward enhancing instructional skills* in 11 different areas. Their perceptions are reflected in the two charts below that provide the percent of effective/very effective ratings. *Working through challenging situations* was selected most often by both groups; *co-teaching* was selected least often.

BT: How effective was time spent with your mentor enhancing your skills in the following areas?¹	2017-18	2018-19
Working through challenging situations	84%	86%
Locating resources and materials	77%	80%
Classroom observations	77%	79%
Classroom observations utilizing observational feedback	78%	79%
Implementing activities to help students form relationships and manage behaviors	72%	77%
Planning for differentiated instruction	66%	67%
Developing meaningful professional goals and student learning growth goals	63%	65%
Lesson/Unit planning	60%	65%
Collection and analysis of student data	61%	60%
Aligning lessons with the Common Core/Content Standards	53%	52%
Co-teaching	26%	22%

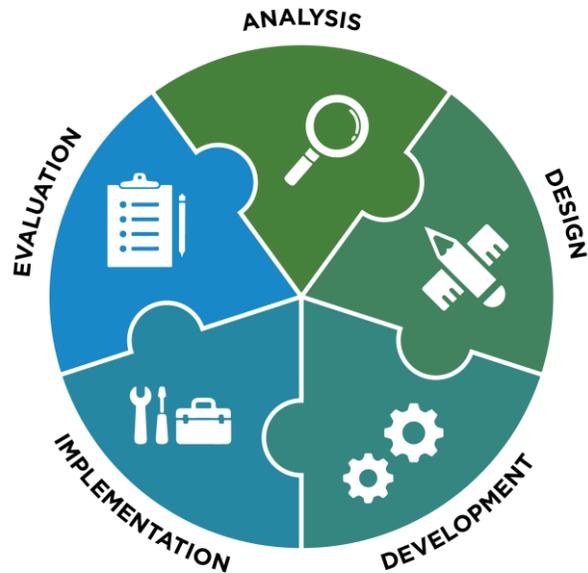
¹Numbers of responses ranged from 1001 to 1013 (2017-18) and 1019-1025 (2018-19) for each item.

BTM: How effective was the time you spent with your beginning teacher(s) enhancing their skills in the following areas?¹	2017-18	2018-19
Working through challenging situations	95%	96%
Locating resources and materials	94%	91%
Classroom observations	85%	86%
Classroom observations utilizing observational feedback	89%	88%
Implementing activities to help students form relationships and manage behaviors	86%	93%
Planning for differentiated instruction	81%	77%
Developing meaningful professional goals and student learning growth goals	67%	66%
Lesson/Unit planning	79%	80%
Collection and analysis of student data	76%	74%
Aligning lessons with the Common Core/Content Standards	61%	66%
Co-teaching	48%	39%

¹Numbers of responses ranged from 163-166 (2017-18) and 187-191 (2018-19) for each item.

Systematically Design Instruction Toward Specific Learning Goals (HLP #12)

Components of this HLP practice include clearly defined expectations and learning goals; breaking tasks down for students to more easily understand; delivering sequential instruction that moves from what students know to higher order skills; assessing students on skills; and, most critically, providing feedback to the student to remediate misunderstandings. Mentees plan sequenced learning experiences to meet all learners' goals based on educational and social-emotional objectives and what the mentee knows about the learner's current skills and needs. Through careful planning, mentees teach instructional strategies and create/use resources, materials, and learning environments that address the individual strengths and needs of each learner.



Example of Mentor/Mentee Interaction

- Mentor works with mentee to identify learning goals, instructional level of students, intervention or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, and curriculum.
- Mentor helps mentee to break skills into component parts such as task analysis, chunking information, time and attention span of students, complexity of skill, building upon and making connections with previous skills.
- Mentor works with mentee to sequence skills: plan and teach lesson using sequential process such as simple to complex, include familiar content that students are able to connect with to connecting what students know to new content.
- Mentor observes mentee lesson and provides feedback to mentee. Together they reflect upon what went well, what changes could be made for next time, next steps, and support needed.

Beginning teachers and **beginning teacher mentors** were asked to what degree they received/provided support in 21 different areas. The table below shows the top five areas they indicated. The results are based on the combined responses of *quite a bit* and *a great deal*. Although these areas were more often indicated by mentors, four out of five of the categories of support are identical between the two groups and the two years.

BT/BTM: Greatest Amounts of Support Received	2017-18		2018-19	
	Quite a bit/A great deal			
	BT	BTM	BT	BTM
Provided emotional support	72%	83%	74%	84%
Supported me with strategies to better manage my classroom	64%	84%	66%	80%
Supported me with resources and materials to improve my teaching	62%	78%	64%	70%
Supported me with strategies and resources to help students form relationships and manage behaviors	59%	73%	62%	72%
Supported me with strategies and resources to help with job related stress			59%	
Assistance in developing a repertoire of instructional strategies				72%
Supported me with strategies and resources to help meet district goals and requirements	57%	63%		

Provide Scaffolded Supports (HLP #15)

These are supports that can be provided to students to help them understand what is being taught such as graphic organizers, visual cues, manipulatives, technology, and teacher modeled strategy. Teachers plan supports into lessons or at times these supports may be taught in the moment. Planned lessons include a scaffolding of complex skills into smaller manageable chunks that allows the student to continue to build upon their strengths as they learn new knowledge and skills.



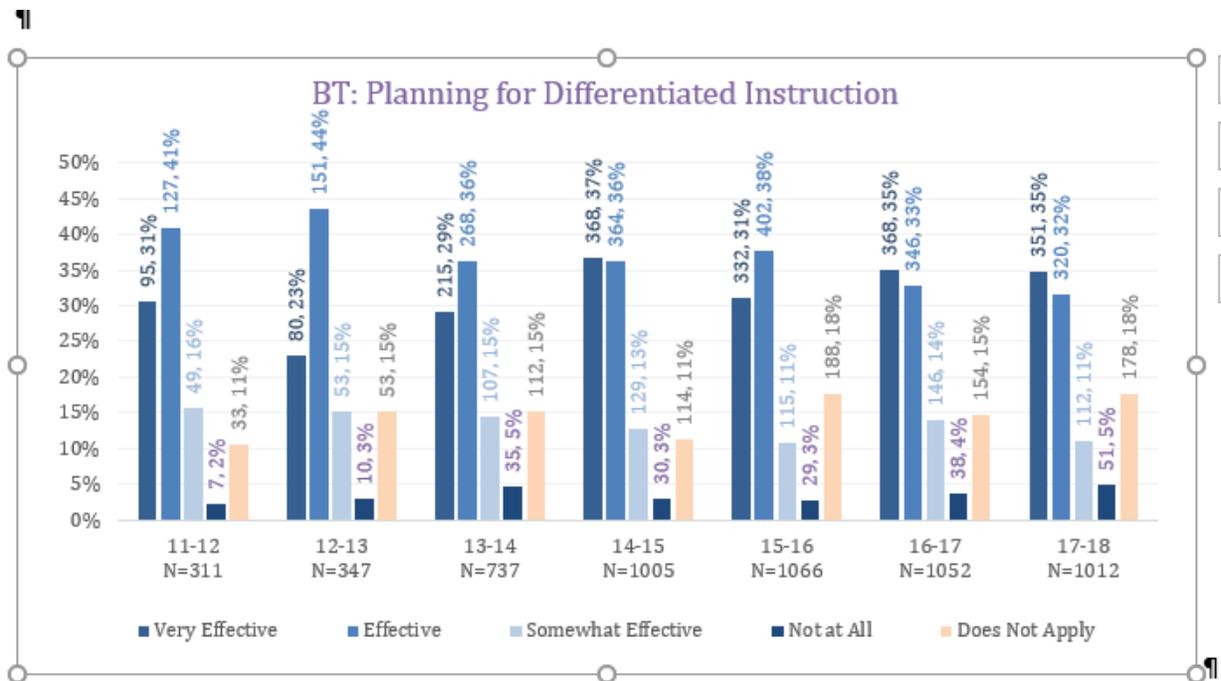
An example of this would be gradual release of responsibility to reinforce an instructional strategy where the teacher models a strategy with the whole group, then works with a group of students, students then work with a partner to practice the skill, and then students work independently on the skill.

Example of Mentor/Mentee Interaction

Mentee is planning on reteaching a lesson implementing feedback the mentor provided previously, Prior to the lesson, the mentor meets with the mentee to help them determine scaffolded supports for all students. Mentor observes mentee’s lesson, gathers observational data based on predetermined focus, reviews data with mentee and provides feedback on the lesson based on implementation of scaffolded supports for students.

“My mentor helped me look at data and provide differentiation strategies to high and low performing students.” (BT, 2019)

Beginning Teachers were asked “As a Beginning Teacher how important did you find following sources. The chart below represents Beginning teacher Responses from 2011-2018 specific to Differentiated Instruction.



Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Student Learning and Behavior (HLP #8/22)

Providing feedback increases student engagement during instruction and improves student learning outcomes. It allows teachers to monitor and check for understanding while also building student confidence to ask clarifying and probing questions. It prompts students to continue successful attempts during practice and remedies errors before they become entrenched. Mentees provide positive and constructive feedback to guide children's learning, increase motivation, and improve engagement. Mentees establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment in which the norms, routines, and procedures for learner behavior are positively stated and explicitly taught in a culturally sustaining manner. Mentees construct and maintain a productive learning environment by adapting classroom procedures to each learner's cognitive and motivational needs.



Example of Mentor/Mentee Interaction

Mentor provides feedback to mentee highlighting success of lesson, evidence and data to support successes, and areas of focus for planning the next lesson. Mentor and mentee discuss next steps and supports that can be offered.

The data table listed below identifies how mentors helped beginning teachers overall throughout their mentorship.

Beginning teachers were asked about five *overall ways their mentor helped them*, and were asked to check all applicable areas. As this table shows, the majority of beginning teachers indicated that their mentor increased the effectiveness of their teaching, and almost three-quarters indicated that he/she impacted students' learning. Further, collaboration and communication were strongly impacted.

BT: Overall My Mentor Helped Me:	2017-18	2018-19
Increase the effectiveness of my teaching	85%	87%
Impact my students' learning	72%	74%
Work collaboratively with other teachers at my school	46%	45%
Communicate effectively with parents	39%	39%

Successes from the Field

Project Directors from consortiums around the state were asked to identify an accomplishment that they are most proud.

1. Moving from a buddy system with trained mentors to a full and partial-release model of mentoring has had a noticeable impact on instruction. -High Desert Mentor Project
2. A high percentage of new teachers and administrators are feeling supported by participating in the mentor program. -Mentoring for Excellence (PPS)
3. The continuity and consistency of the mentor program which directly impacts the number of teachers who have been mentored. Seeing teachers who were previously mentored move into leadership roles throughout our district. Teachers' willingness to be mentored. -Mid-Willamette Valley Mentor Consortium
4. 93% of our beginning teachers attribute their success as a beginning teacher to their participation in the mentor program. We are proud that we try for best fit matches between mentors and mentees, whether by level or by subject matter. -St. Beaver Mentor Consortium
5. Development of professional learning summit for beginning teachers. -Douglas ESD Mentor Consortium
6. Eighty-eight percent of teachers have been retained since participating in the mentor program. -Roseburg New Teacher Consortium
7. Building a comprehensive systematic network within the district and between the districts from pre-service to administration. -East Columbia Collaborative
8. Growing teacher leaders and instilling sense of pride and voice in the profession. - Southern Oregon Mentor Consortium

“She has helped me really think through each step of the lesson and anticipate where I need to provide additional instructions. She has also been a great person to brainstorm other projects with.” BT, 2019

“She observed my teaching on many occasions and would give me feedback on my teaching strategies, student engagement, and ideas for next time I have a similar lesson.” BT, 2019

“My mentor supported me by offering new instructional strategies expanding on my current ones, providing consistent constructive feedback, and classroom management strategies. I don't think I would have made it without her!” BT, 2019

9. Teachers more readily adapt and initiate new learning in their classrooms because the mentors are attending professional learning session with new teachers and coaching implementation in the classroom. -Lincoln County Mentor Consortium
10. Creating a new culture that honors and supports new teachers and the profession. - North Coast Mentor Consortium

Closing

High Leverage Practices enhance a teacher's ability to practice a skill with consistent feedback in order to implement instructional practices with fidelity.¹ Mentoring provides beginning teachers an opportunity to work with a mentor to gain the skills necessary to become effective educators for students. When beginning teachers were asked "To what degree did you gain instructional skills by working with your mentor this past year?" 95% indicated their instructional skills benefitted from the relationship. There is a strong correlation between the mentor/mentee relationship that increases the mentee's effectiveness in the area of instructional practices and in turn has a positive impact on student learning and achievement.³

End Notes

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ODE Mentoring Research Briefs

References – please use this link to find all references for this Brief:



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