Mentoring for All
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What’s new in version 2?
Along with numerous updated links and illustrative graphics, version 2 of *Mentoring for All* contains new content reflective of the voices of mentors in a variety of roles across Ontario. Specific additions include:

- Building Relational Trust – Practical ideas (pg. 9)
- Appreciative inquiry – Themes of Success (pg. 23)
- Mentoring as Authentic Learning (pg. 25)
- Mentoring for All Online Learning (pg. 32)

The eBook version of *Mentoring for All* can be accessed on Teach Ontario at: https://www.teachontario.ca/community/explore/mentoring-for-all.

Please accept our appreciation for your ongoing commitment to supporting the learning and growth of your colleagues and ultimately our students.
LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE – MENTORING FOR ALL

Thinking About All Learners

At the core of Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario is a commitment to authentic, collaborative, continuous learning for all our learners.

Authentic learning is owned by the learner. It is job-embedded, based on “real world” learning needs, and provides meaningful opportunities for all educators and board staff to learn with (and from) students, colleagues, administrators, parents/guardians and central staff.

Powerful learning designs like mentorship de-privatize instruction, foster collaborative professionalism, and support “small l” leadership via the intentional sharing of knowledge and practice between colleagues.

By providing meaningful learning for all we are modelling and supporting the development of the types of iterative and authentic learning ecosystems we would like each educator to create and live with students in their own classrooms. In a nutshell, fostering growth and development for all learners is a critical pre-condition for achieving excellence.
Foundational Elements of Mentorship

In our shared work supporting the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) across the province we are increasingly engaged with school boards providing a continuum of mentorship based on the authentic learning needs of the mentors they support.

Effective mentorship skills are highly transferable and include:

- Creating a Mentoring Web
- Building Relational Trust
- Facilitating Learning Focused Conversations
- Providing Meaningful and Growth Oriented Feedback
- Utilizing Powerful Mentoring Designs

The diagram below illustrates this move away from an “initiative driven” and/or “role specific” approach to supporting mentors to what we characterize as mentoring for all.

Reciprocal learning is a foundational component of all mentoring relationships. One of the most powerful outcomes of mentorship is it serves as a means for job embedded deprivatization of practice and fosters reflection, learning and growth of mentors themselves. In summary, mentorship is an act of learning.
MULTIPLE MODELS OF MENTORSHIP

Building a Mentoring Web

For 12 years, I lived on a houseboat (aka a floating home). I had many amazing experiences with nature including the fact that spiders were everywhere.

Each morning before kayaking I spent several minutes attending to cobwebs with a broom. The webs with only one or two strands were very easy to destroy, whereas the webs with many strands were much stronger, more resilient and secure.

When we think about building a mentoring web that’s the idea – the more strands in the web, the stronger it is.

Beyond one to one “dating game” mentor matching, mentoring webs are constructed by the learner. Each is unique, based on authentic learning needs.

In their longitudinal research of the New Teacher Induction Program, Christine Frank & Associates found that high growth new teachers accessed five to seven different mentorship supports. So again, the idea of a constructing learning via a menu of personalized growth opportunities with the support of multiple mentors emerges as a powerful learning design.
Multiple Models of Mentorship

Who are the people at your school or work site (or beyond) who bring you strength, energy, passion and hope?

They will be your true mentors.

Broker Mentoring

ROLE
- Mentor provides orientation to school or work site logistics and culture
- Mentor brokers involvement of colleagues as needs arise

CONSIDERATIONS
- Consultant type relationship, fewer opportunities for collaboration and coaching
- May be initial support until other mentoring relationships are established or ongoing throughout the year

One to One Mentor Matching

ROLE
- Mentor is site-based and is matched on an individual basis to a new colleague
- Mentor adopts consultant, collaboration and coaching stances based on the needs of the person they are working with

CONSIDERATIONS
- Mentoring relationships that flourish are reciprocal – both parties learn and grow
- Greater "ownership" occurs when the mentor has volunteered and the person being mentored has been involved in the choice of mentor

Group Mentoring

ROLE
- Mentor works with 2 or more individuals or one individual may have 2 or more mentors
- Model provide opportunities for collaboration between both new and experienced colleagues

CONSIDERATIONS
- This model provides flexibility if school or work site has large number of new staff (or mentors)
- This model is often embedded in a school or site wide “mentoring culture” where all staff are engaged in ongoing collaboration
Informal Mentoring

**ROLE**
- Individuals connect with a variety of colleagues as needs arise
- Mentor/mentee roles are fluid – often referred to as Peer Mentoring as in many cases the informal mentors are relatively new themselves

**CONSIDERATIONS**
- Spontaneous, informal nature of relationship lends itself to collaboration
- Relying on “accident, geography and friendship” may not work for all as new staff could feel isolated if not part of any mentoring relationships

Online Mentoring

**ROLE**
- Using online conferencing new staff can participate in discussion and sharing with both experienced and other beginning colleagues

**CONSIDERATIONS**
- Enables access to a variety of resources and perspectives outside the school or work site
- Not everyone may feel comfortable sharing issues and concerns in a “public” online forum

Communities of Practice

**ROLE**
- Educators with similar teaching assignments and/or professional interests form learning networks across a region or district
- These networks may meet face to face and/or online

**CONSIDERATIONS**
- Extends the mentoring web beyond school or work site
- While board level support of these learning networks can be very helpful, it is important that the learning agenda is not externally mandated

*Having a formally assigned mentor is not linked to growth – being mentored is.*

*(NTIP longitudinal research findings – 2015)*
MENTORING IS...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mutual</th>
<th>Mentoring relationships that flourish are reciprocal – all parties learn and grow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Evolving</td>
<td>Mentors exhibit flexibility of stance and role based on the needs of the person they are supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Non-evaluative</td>
<td>Mentoring supports are not connected to evaluation or judgement of a colleague’s performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Relational trust is built through effective listening and fostered in an environment characterized by emotional safety and mutual respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Through powerful learning designs (e.g., observation and debriefing) practice is deprivatized and the intentional sharing of knowledge and practice occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Real</td>
<td>Mentoring activities are personalized, based on each person’s authentic learning goals and connected to their “real world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Conditions to foster effective mentoring relationships are supported at both the school and board level (e.g., joint release days, foundational learning for mentors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Honours strengths</td>
<td>A deliberate seeking out of the strengths and attributes that each person brings to the mentoring relationship sets the context for meaningful sharing to occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Invitational</td>
<td>All parties have voluntarily chosen to engage in mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Personalized</td>
<td>Each person may choose to engage in multiple models of mentorship as they build a web of mentoring supports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging Themes of Success from Ontario Mentors – Glideshow
Voices of Mentors

Over the past year, Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (TPSB) has had the privilege of facilitating Mentoring for All professional learning sessions with a wide variety of mentors in school boards across Ontario.

At each session participants shared how they are building (and rebuilding) trust. Below are their thoughts:

Building Inclusion

- Learning about personal interests (e.g., sport, hobby, weekend)
- Creating a safe environment for sharing
- Having an open door (literally and metaphorically)
- Structuring goal setting conversation(s) to avoid misalignment of expectations
- Using mediational questions to surface attributes
- Modelling a genuine interest in learning together
- Identifying a third point as a focus for collaboration (e.g., a specific student need)
- Helping build connections with community and colleagues
- Including the person in school (and social) activities
- Demonstrating appreciation and belief in your colleague(s)
- Providing an "oasis of calm"
- Celebrating successes together

Modelling Mutual Respect

- Respecting confidential nature of relationship
- Remaining non-judgemental
- Walking in the person's shoes
- Avoiding the "you shoulds" via providing a menu of options for the person to consider
- Following through on next steps
- Being receptive to feedback yourself
- Celebrating diversity of thoughts and perspectives
- Focusing on each other’s strengths
### Sharing “Real World” Challenges

- Sharing own challenges – levels the playing field and builds trust
- Acknowledging the “messiness” of learning
- Being vulnerable – opens the door to deeper sharing
- Sharing own challenges but also the “quiet victories” that occur each day

### Listening, Listening, Listening

- Being available to listen (both mentally and in real time)
- Being authentically present
- Recognizing the power of silence and the importance of simply listening
- Listening to learn as opposed to listening to speak
- Listening with uncertainty
THE POWER OF LISTENING

Building Relational Trust

While there are many different approaches to mentorship, what they all share in common is an emphasis on the importance of listening.

As the Chinese character for listening illustrates, listening is a complex skill. At its core, listening shows we care. It is a powerful tool for establishing and building the trust and rapport essential for any mentoring relationship.

Elements of Listening

Attending Fully

A real barrier to listening can be actually being present in the moment when someone is speaking. Many of us are guilty of “fake attentive listening” where we smile and nod at the speaker but in reality we’re thinking of the dozens of things still to do that day.

Attending fully involves physically unplugging from our personal electronic devices and also letting go of our “mental e-mail” in order to fully focus on the person who is speaking to us.

Pausing and Paraphrasing

Often we “listen to speak” when engaged in conversation. In other words, we begin to quickly construct answers or advice in our heads rather than truly listening. Both pausing and paraphrasing can be effective tools for acknowledging what the speaker is saying and allowing the person to clarify their thoughts.

An elegant paraphrase doesn’t parrot back everything the speaker has said, rather it’s a single sentence that expresses the gist of what you’ve heard and understood as a listener. We can choose to paraphrase the content of what we’ve heard or the feelings behind them or both. An example is below:

• Sounds like you’re very worried (feeling) about planning for the open house. (content)
Non-Verbal Encouragement
Albert Mehrabian’s pioneering research in the 1960’s examined three key elements of any face-to-face communication:

- Our words / Our tone of voice / Our body language

While his 7 / 38 / 55 rule (7% words / 38% tone / 55% body language) is subject to much interpretation and academic debate, the emphasis of how important non-verbal communication can be is worth considering. If our body language is congruent with the attributes of an effective listener we are sending a message of genuine interest in what the speaker has to say.

Reflecting Feelings
A learning focused conversation is an intricate dance. As a skilled listener you may be adjusting your tone, facial expression or even body position based on the cues you are observing from the person speaking. This is not mimicking or mirroring the person, rather it’s a sense of being in synch.

At its core, reflecting feelings is caring with your heart about what the person with whom you’re conversing is saying. What’s truly rewarding in working with both adults and students is that when people feel that sense of caring, how much more rich the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas becomes.

Power of Listening (1 min 21 sec)
This video is part of the 2014-15 Associate Teacher Partnership Project led by Lakehead University in collaboration with 7 local school districts.
GOAL SETTING CONVERSATIONS

Setting the Stage for Success

Mentoring is a powerful, personalized learning design. Yet the dynamics of mentoring relationships are complex. When there is a misalignment of expectations significant challenges can arise.

Engaging in collaborative goal setting conversations at the outset of any mentoring relationship helps to set the stage for success. Two potentially powerful outcomes of these learning focused conversations are:

- Building relational trust
- Clarifying roles and expectations

Practical Ideas

Building Relational Trust
Being “present” by applying the elements of effective listening is at the core of building trust and rapport in any relationship.

Clarifying Roles and Expectations
Position yourself as a co-learner by sharing your own learning goals for the mentoring relationship. Mentoring relationships that flourish are reciprocal – all parties learn and grow.

Possible Goal Setting Conversation Questions for Mentoring Teams

- What strengths and attributes do you bring to your role?
- What goals do you have for your professional learning this year?
- How do you see our collaboration best working?
- What are the best ways for us to communicate? (preferred tools, times, methods)
- Who else can provide support and mentorship?
- What are the next steps in our collaboration?
ROLES & STANCES OF AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR

Consulting / Collaborating / Coaching (The 3Cs) at a Glance

In their book *Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships* Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman describe a practical framework for mentors to consider. The chart below provides an at a glance guide to the 3Cs adapted with permission from their work. While these 3Cs are helpful as a frame, effective mentors demonstrate *flexibility of stance and role* based on the needs of the people they support. Mentoring relationships that flourish are reciprocal – all parties learn and grow!

### Consultant
*Offering Support and Providing Resources*

**CHARACTERISTICS**
- Mentor shares key information about logistics, school or work site culture, policies and practices
- Beyond simple advice, a consultant provides the “why,” “what,” and “how” of their thinking

**CUES**
- Credible voice / Use of pronoun “I” / Phrases like “it’s important to”…. “keep in mind that”

**CAUTIONS**
- We tend to default to this stance / Overuse can build dependency on the mentor

### Collaborator
*Creating Challenge and Encouraging Growth*

**CHARACTERISTICS**
- Mentor and colleague co-develop strategies and approaches
- 50/50 pattern of interaction and idea production

**CUES**
- Confident, approachable voice / Use of pronoun “we” / Phrases like “let’s think about”…. “how might we”

**CAUTIONS**
- Mentors need to ensure collaboration is authentic and they don’t take over

### Coach
*Facilitating Professional Vision*

**CHARACTERISTICS**
- Mentor supports internal idea production through inquiry and paraphrase
- Ultimate aim is to develop colleague’s internal resources for self-coaching and independence

**CUES**
- Approachable voice, attending fully / Use of pronoun “you”
- Questions like “what might be some ways to?”.... “given all that you know, what options are you considering?”

**CAUTIONS**
- Stance can cause frustration if colleague lacks internal resources for idea generation
Learning Focused Conversations

Many mentors may find themselves engaged in the three types of conversations described below:

- Anticipating a new project, assignment or unit of study (Planning)
- Looking back upon a meeting, event or any completed task (Reflecting)
- Addressing a specific challenge or concern that is top of mind (Problem Solving)

Illustrative Example of a Conversation Map

Learning focused conversations represent authentic opportunities for mentors to continue to listen and by doing so foster the relational trust that is so important for successful mentoring relationships.

The conversation map below is intended to be a starting point for thinking. An attribute of skilled mentors is they demonstrate flexibility of stance and role based on the needs of the person they are working with.

Step by Step

(1) Elegant Paraphrase

As the beginning teacher begins the planning, reflecting or problem solving conversation, the mentor models the elements of listening illustrated above, thereby encouraging the person to continue speaking. When the person is “finished” explaining their issue in one sentence the mentor summarizes the “gist” of what they have heard.

An elegant paraphrase can reflect heart (how the person is feeling) or content (the big issue or challenge). In the illustrative example to the left, the mentor has summarized both feeling and content. Usually the speaker responds with an emphatic yeah and/or elaborates on the concern or issue in greater detail.

“So even though the rest of your class is coming along well you’re feeling frustrated because there’s one student you just don’t feel is connecting with anybody.”
(2) Explore Options

“Given all that you know about building inclusion in your classroom, what are some of the options you are considering as you try to bring your new student on board with the rest of the class?”

Instead of offering advice or autobiography, the mentor assists the beginning teacher in accessing their thinking about the choices they have. Key to this step is a “positive pre-supposition” that the speaker has already given the issue thought and has internal strategies and resources they can bring to bear.

Note that the question in the illustrative example is forward looking. At this point the speaker will often provide a synopsis of a number of things they are considering. The role of the mentor is to continue to listen without offering any counsel. Once a number of options have been surfaced, consider proceeding to step # 3.

(3) Plan Next Steps

“Wow, you’ve obviously given this a lot of thought. As you go back to your classroom, what will be the first step you take in your effort to help this student find an entry point into your classroom community?”

The mentor’s goal here is to have the beginning teacher consider all the options they have shared and articulate a specific next step or strategy that they will apply to the issue, problem or challenge.

Once the beginning teacher has articulated the practical idea(s) they are going to walk away with from this conversation and attempt to implement in their context, consider proceeding to step # 4.

(4) Self-Evaluation

“So you’re going to start by having the student work more in groups with others - how will you know if this strategy is working?”

When next steps have been established, the mentor assists the speaker in developing some “measures” that will let them know about whether the approach they’ve chosen is working.

The mentor encourages the beginning teacher to respond with specific indicators that they would like see. At this point the mentor may choose to affirm what she or he has heard and bring the conversation to a close.

Overview of the 3Cs (2 min 5 sec)
Example of a Learning Focused Conversation

The videos below are part of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) Mentor Training series and used here with permission from ETFO.

- **Learning Focused Conversation Example**
  - Coaching conversation with a beginning teacher (3 min 37 sec)

- **Learning Focused Conversation Reflection**
  - A beginning teacher reflects on the value of coaching conversations (28 sec)

- **Learning Focused Conversation Map**
  - Overview of the conversation map and the thinking behind it (1 min 41 sec)

Facilitating Learning Focused Conversations – Ideas to Consider

**Setting Aside**
Often we “listen to speak” when engaged in conversation. In other words, we begin to quickly construct answers or advice in our heads rather than truly listening. Setting aside our personal need to connect (via autobiography) or offer immediate judgement (via advice) enables authentic listening to occur.

**Attending Fully**
A real barrier to listening can be actually being present in the moment when someone is speaking. Attending fully involves physically unplugging from our personal electronic devices and also letting go of our “mental e-mail” in order to fully focus on the person who is speaking to us.

**Pausing and Paraphrasing**
Both pausing and paraphrasing can be effective tools for acknowledging what the speaker is saying and allowing the person to clarify their thoughts. An elegant paraphrase is a single sentence that expresses the gist of what you’ve heard and understood as a listener. It can focus on feeling or content or both.

**Using Questions to Mediate Thinking**
Open ended mediational questions connect the person to their strengths, inner resources, and available supports. They can assist in exploring options and in the development of practical next steps for the speaker.

**Flexibility of Stance and Role**
Not every conversation is a coaching conversation. While these ideas to consider above may be helpful as a framework for thinking, effective mentors demonstrate flexibility of stance and role based on the needs of the person they are working with.
SCALING QUESTIONS AS A TOOL FOR DEBRIEFING

Scaling Questions Conversation Map at a Glance

- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the worst lesson you’ve experienced and 10 being the best, how was this lesson for you?
- Oh a <e.g., 6> – What made it a 6?
- How might you bump it up a notch to a 7? (specific ideas)
- Continue with Coaching stance or shift to Consultant or Collaborator based on needs

Opportunities for individuals to reflect on practice and debrief with mentors can be powerful learning for both parties. One approach to debriefing conversations is “scaling questions” adapted from the solution-focussed conversation work of Nancy McConkey.

What is powerful about this tool is not only that variety of mentoring contexts within which it can be applied but also the underlying assumptions described below.

Attributes Based Approach
A purposeful seeking out of strengths is at the heart of this idea. Often, the person you are mentoring has given their challenges considerable thought prior to speaking with you.

Islands of Competence
By asking about the positive things you ensure the conversation begins with a success. Even a “1” is better than a “0!”

Ownership resides with the Mentee
Your impression is set aside as ultimately the person you are mentoring will be the one implementing the ideas in their own context (classroom, school, work site).

Flexibility of Stance & Role
As a skilled mentor you may choose to continue in the coaching stance or shift to consultant or collaborator, based on the needs of the person you are debriefing with.

Don’t like Numbers?
For some, applying a quantitative number to an experience may not feel comfortable. If that’s the case, the initial scaling question can be simply adapted as in the example below:

- Thinking about both the worst morning you’ve ever had and the best one; how was this morning for you?
- Oh...the morning was “fine” – Fine sounds better than so so...what made it fine?
- How might you bump it up to “very fine” (specific ideas)
- Continue with Coaching stance or shift to Consultant or Collaborator based on needs

At first, scaling questions may feel a bit like following a script but over time this tool can simply be embedded into a mentor’s repertoire of learning focused conversation strategies.
Utilizing Scaling Questions – More Resources

These videos are part of the 2014-15 Associate Teacher Partnership Project led by Lakehead University in collaboration with 7 local school districts to support the mentoring of Associate Teachers.

Complexity of Teaching and Learning – Set Asides (1 min 56 sec)

Scaling Questions as a Tool for Debriefing (2 min 43 sec)

This video is part of an OISE/TDSB project to support the mentoring of Associate Teachers entitled Authentic Voices from the Field: Associate Teachers Talk about Effective Feedback.

Using Scaling Questions – Reflections from Associate Teachers and Teacher Candidates (2 min 49 sec)

Creating a Third Point – Glideshow
CREATING A THIRD POINT

Providing Meaningful Feedback

As mentors we are often called upon to provide feedback. So how do we do this in a respectful and meaningful manner? Creating a “third point” can greatly assist as it helps shift the focus away from personal to external.

Creating a “third point” can greatly assist as it helps shift the focus away from personal to external.

Thinking about our scaling questions example may be helpful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you do this morning?</th>
<th>From 1 to 10, how was the lesson?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>External, third point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practical Ideas

Collaboration vs. “Face-offs”

If you and your colleague are sitting down for any planning, reflecting or problem solving conversation, consider positioning the chairs at 45 degree angle rather than directly facing each other. This is also a great set up for parent – teacher interviews where you can sit in this collaborative stance with student work on the table in front of you both as the third point. Similarly, using hand gestures you can metaphorically place the problem or challenge in the physical space in front of you both during a learning focused conversation.

Observation vs. Impression

Often when we provide feedback without meaning to we imply judgement. Below is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impression</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students were out of control</td>
<td>During the lesson four students left their seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception, implies personal judgement</td>
<td>Observation of behaviour, third point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoiding “You Should”

As mentors we are often called upon for input and advice and certainly based on individual needs this is an important component of the consultant stance. That said, if there are two words we strive to avoid using in mentoring conversations they are “you should” – for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should make sure everyone is listening and paying attention before you begin the lesson</th>
<th>Something that worked for me was using a signal to focus students before giving instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feels like a command</td>
<td>Feels like an idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AS A TOOL FOR REFLECTION AND GROWTH

Appreciative Inquiry at a Glance

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an “attributes-based” approach that can be used to facilitate reflective conversations either during formal professional learning sessions or as part of the ongoing dialogue between mentors and colleagues.

At the core of AI is the belief that all participants come to mentoring relationships possessing many strengths and that by building on these assets, the answers to the issues and challenges they face can be collaboratively constructed.

This thinking is why AI 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.

Appreciative Inquiry Conversation Map

Below you’ll find some practical ideas for using AI. The Appreciative Inquiry Commons is a great place to explore the concept of AI in greater depth: http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu

Step by Step

Before the Conversation: Power of Listening

At its core, listening shows we care. It is a powerful tool for establishing and building the relational trust essential for any mentoring relationship.

Reviewing the elements of listening sets the context for Appreciative Inquiry conversations and promotes an open, non-evaluative atmosphere conducive to meaningful sharing of thoughts and ideas.
Beginning the Conversation: Themes of Success

- What’s already working well?

As you think about your commitment to making a difference for students, tell a story about the best experience you have had so far in your work this year?

- Without being humble, what skills, values, and attitudes do you bring to your work that contributes to your ability to support and mentor others?

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 both new colleagues and mentors as well as highlighting the successes they’ve experienced in the year.

Following this segment of the conversation, participants may note common threads or themes that ran through their stories of success.

Some of these “themes of success” may actually provide useful strategies for the challenges and issues participants encounter.

Continuing the Conversation: Issues and Challenges

- What’s not working so well?

What issues you are encountering? (i.e. What are the stones in your shoe?)

- Looking ahead, what are the “wishes” you have for your role?

Acknowledging the “real world” challenges both new and experienced colleagues encounter in their work brings authenticity to the AI process.

As the listener in the conversation, it is important for mentors to remember their role is non-evaluative and supportive.

Concluding the Conversation: Practical Ideas and Next Steps

- Collaborative Strategy Harvest of Ideas

What specific ideas / strategies / resources are you considering to address the issue or concerns expressed?

- So What / Now What – share an individual action plan of possible next steps (next day / next week / next month)

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, mentors may decide to:

- Consult (offer support and resources)
- Collaborate (create challenge and encourage growth)
- Coach (facilitate professional vision)
REFLECTIONS FROM ONTARIO MENTORS

Emerging Themes from Appreciative Inquiry

In our work with mentors across Ontario we have engaged in an Appreciative Inquiry process where mentors have shared their most meaningful experiences.

Below you’ll see illustrative examples of themes of success shared by your colleagues. They highlight the importance of being authentic, flexible and growth oriented in our approach to mentorship.

**Authentic**

- Setting aside and being "present" in the moment
- Seeking out the strengths and “gifts” our colleagues bring
- Providing a safe space for discovery and sharing of mistakes (aka learning opportunities)
- Being aware of the importance of sense of care, trust in the relationship
- Remembering that a few words at an opportune time can make a huge difference
- Sharing authentic JOY!

**Flexible**

- Acting as a resource rather than being the expert
- Collaborating to problem solve
- Thinking beyond 1 to 1 matching to help colleagues build a mentoring web
- Demonstrating flexibility of stance and role (3C’s) based on needs
- Opening our minds (and hearts) to different approaches and acknowledging the complexity and messiness of learning

**Growth Oriented**

- Engaging in reciprocal learning
- Using scaling questions as a protocol for debriefing and “checking in”
- Being a model ourselves by walking the talk and following through
- Deliberately "marinating" what's working well
- Letting go of “mentor guilt” - and continuing to connect with colleagues who bring us joy, strength, passion and hope
WHAT WE CAN INFLUENCE....
our 50% of the equation

Below are some key ideas about how as mentors we can be mindful in our approach to “the complex dynamics of human interaction” that shape all of our relationships.

Self-Knowledge
Knowing how we respond internally and externally is the 50% of the equation we can influence in any human interaction. Just like with students, we can make conscious choices to inflate or deflate challenges we encounter in interacting with our colleagues.

Power of Listening
Simply being “present” and attending fully is an integral part of establishing the relational trust that is an essential component of any mentoring relationship.

Attributes Based Approach
By purposefully seeking out the strengths and attributes our colleagues possess we empower not only the people we are working with, but continue to engage in our own learning and growth. We have so much to learn from and with each other!

Well-Being
In a nutshell, by taking care of ourselves we have more to give to others. Sounds simplistic, but sometimes there are deep truths in simple ideas. Basic things like daily physical activity, reflection, nutrition, and laughter are powerful gifts we can give ourselves, those we mentor, and ultimately the students we serve.
MENTORING AS AUTHENTIC LEARNING

Authentic Professional Learning is...

Mentorship enables all learners to build a strong web of support that is personal to their unique learning needs and goals. Opportunities for professional learning and growth are collaboratively constructed and reflect the 4R’s of authentic learning summarized below.

Relational

- Relational trust creates an inclusive learning space with all partners in the learning process listening to each other (students, educators, parents and school community)
- All learners collaboratively construct communities of practice that build upon their strengths, attributes and experiences

Responsive

- Learners are listened to and their individual and collective voices directly inform learning designs
- The “how” and “what” of the learning designs employed are based on authentic learning goals identified by the participants
- Learning “makes sense” to the learners and involves authentic collaboration, choice and voice and agency
Recursive

- Rich learning tasks reflect embedded beliefs that learning itself is a messy, iterative, recursive process
- Protocols for application of learning, follow-up, and evaluation of impact are embedded into the learning process

Real World

- Learners construct learning together that is relevant and has authentic real-world connections and applications
- Learning designs that leverage peer-to-peer networks for deep learning and foster the intentional sharing of knowledge and practice are utilized
- A direct connection to student learning and well-being is clearly evident (i.e. students are at the centre of the learning)
OBSERVATION AND DEBRIEFING PROTOCOLS

Learning From and With Each Other

Observation and debriefing, whether it be informal observation of a mentor’s classroom by a beginning teacher or a more formal demonstration classroom or site of learning process, represents a powerful tool for personalized and authentic professional learning.

By learning from and with each other, colleagues begin to build meaningful communities of collaboration focused on the “real world” of teaching and learning in practice.

Core Elements of the Learning Experience

The following core elements are integral to ensuring the classroom observation learning experience is meaningful for all participants.

Orientation
- An opportunity for visiting teachers to share specific learning goals for the observation with the teacher being observed and/or visit guide

Observation
- Focused observation of teaching and learning in the actual classroom over a sustained period of time (e.g. a full morning)

Debriefing
- An opportunity for visiting teachers and mentors to reflect on the classroom experience, ask questions, and share ideas with each other and the hosting teacher, and/or the visit guide (if applicable)

Action Planning
- A structured so what / now what action planning process for applying the learning to each participants’ specific teaching contexts

Follow Up
- Direct assistance for visiting teachers from mentors and/or the visit guide to support the implementation of new ideas and strategies back in their own classrooms
The Importance of Collaborative Debriefing and Action Planning

Classroom observation without collaborative debriefing can have the “orange wallpaper” effect. Participants may like the day, enjoy being in someone else’s classroom, but leave with their next step being to use the same lovely orange wallpaper the demonstration teacher has on their bulletin board.

Immediately following up the classroom observation with a collaborative debriefing and action planning process involving the Classroom Teacher, Mentors, Visit Guide and other visiting teachers allows the focus of the participating teachers to shift away from what they saw to how they can apply their learning to their own teaching context. Focusing on the “so what / now what” provides visiting teachers opportunities to construct the practical next steps they will implement with their own students while simultaneously expanding their web of networking supports.

Shape Reflection Tool

- Something that “squared” with me (i.e. validated prior understanding)
- A question that is still “circling” around in my mind at this point
- Something I learned that could form the “base” of future action
Learning from the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)

Through longitudinal research from 2012 – 2015, Christine Frank & Associates (CFA) found that new teachers have made meaningful and sustained improvements in all four of the core goal areas of NTIP. Below is a summary of our learning about the key factors that make a difference for new teachers.

### Mentoring Web
- Having a formally assigned mentor is not linked to growth...being mentored is.
- High growth new teachers accessed 5 to 7 different mentorship supports (i.e. built a mentoring web).

### Differentiated Learning
- High growth new teachers constructed their NTIP via a menu of authentic learning opportunities using joint release days with multiple mentors.
- Classroom observation and debriefing was the learning design with the strongest correlation to growth in instructional practice.

### Principal Encouragement
- Ongoing feedback and encouragement from the Principal was the strongest predictor of growth in NTIP.
- This speaks to the power of listening, the power of encouragement, and the ability of the principal to provide a meaningful piece of a mentoring web for a new teacher.

### School Culture
- A collaborative school culture was an important factor in building a sense of confidence and efficacy for new teachers.
- When you’re new you tend to adapt or adopt the culture you find yourself in... so again the importance of all mentors, colleagues and supports for all learners in the school.
How Do Mentors and Colleagues Help?

In our longitudinal research we were particularly interested in what actions colleagues took that new teachers found most helpful in supporting their growth. The chart below summarizes our learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing formal and informal support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing resources</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fostering collaboration with beginning teachers, mentors, colleagues (building a mentoring web)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation(s) and debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Month by Month Practical Ideas for NTIP Mentors

Mentor Reflections – Learning from Mentoring

One of the most powerful potential outcomes of this “intentional sharing of knowledge and practice” is the learning of mentors themselves. Here are learning themes that NTIP Mentors have expressed as a result of their learning from and with beginning teachers:

Increases Reflection on Current Practice
- *Mentoring has opened me up to the possibility of growth and to the potential new ideas…. this has helped me become more reflective about my own practice.*

Fosters Inspirational Connections with Colleagues
- *Mentoring has improved my relationships with other teachers (not just new teachers). I’ve become more aware of the value of colleagues, and more encouraged to share.*

Impacts Teaching Practice and Learning of Students
- *Learning about the importance of listening and coaching didn’t just help me support beginning teachers, it helped me become a better mentor for my students!*
Learning About Mentorship and Growth – More Resources

NTIP Longitudinal Research – Key Findings Glideshow

NTIP Board Visits – Key Findings Glideshow

NTIP Learning Voicecasts

TeachOntario

In collaboration with OTF and our TPSB team here at the Ministry, TVO has created TeachOntario; an online platform to support sharing, collaboration and knowledge exchange amongst Ontario educators.

JOIN

- **TeachOntario** to connect and collaborate with thousands of educators from all across the province

  [https://www.teachontario.ca](https://www.teachontario.ca)

SHARE

- Interested mentors may wish to continue to share their learning via the Mentoring for All discussion group on TeachOntario (login to TeachOntario required with board or faculty email)
Each “clickable” module below is designed to provide practical resources for mentors in any role. All of the modules along with the eBook version of *Mentoring for All* can be accessed on *Teach Ontario* at: https://www.teachontario.ca/community/explore/mentoring-for-all.

**Online Modules at a Glance**

- Creating a Mentoring Web
- Building Relational Trust
- Facilitating Learning
- Providing Meaningful and Growth Oriented Feedback
- Focused Conversations
- Utilizing Powerful Mentoring Designs