

# Insights into District Mentor Forums

## SEWNTP Lead Mentor Forum

### December 14, 2009

*Note: BD & MTEC are in their 2nd year of mentor forums. All others are in their 1st year.*

Discussed Mentor Formative Assessment cycle used Cal.

- Most have 2-3 teachers
- Challenges what's working

Highlighted key words

Purpose of meeting

Standards booklet – Continuum.

How it related to B/T Standards & how it related to their B/T's standards they are working on. Mentors work on their own on this

Some mentors used continuum & some do not

Reflections always used on a Cal

General Snapshots to discuss with Mentors

We had low attendance on 1st meeting

Co-facilitator for next meeting

Connecting:

- Great co-facilitating. Lots of good ideas; lots of connecting
- Co-facilitators use & build on personal strengths
- It also adds to the culture on 'this is what we do'
- Works too, because connection is made between co-facilitation
- Can jump in & create connections. When problems arise, one partner can jump in & relieve the other partner

Share things about co-facilitation. What happens when things work out or don't

- CALs can be really hard because when you have more than one B/T, you may not be able to get it all done

This is like ASW – if you analyze student work but just doing it w/ B/T & their ideas are challenges – looking for patterns

- This is for B-T
- We looked at discussion topics as the spot and revised for the mentors when they need it.

What adaptations can you do if you were solo? What ways can we use the 4-corners with one facilitator?

- We were going to do a 4-corners activity, but have it divided into groups then report out
- Lead mentor can step away while mentors facilitate, but they have focus & structure.
- Ransom assignment sometimes works
- Timing is important
- Allowing them to give us feedback so we could adapt the agenda to them.
- Save alone time to focus on agenda
- Meetings are 1 hour and 15 mins. I was concerned a lot how much we could cover. But it moved.
- Now that we shorted the agenda to 1-1 ½ hour, we have better attendance & kept to schedule. I kept saying thank you for coming, stay & go as you need.
- Not much more productive when it goes longer

Using connecting time in ways that time is used effectively. Is there something that works at other schools?

- Off Lead Mentor piece – PDP for those of you who took PDP 690 w/ Nancy was really helpful coaxing the PDP out of B/T. Mentor form – this worked so well. Mentors were so happy.

- Even teachers who have been around become interested in PDP

540 Course  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour sessions w/ Nancy. If you take 584 & team teach it w/ Nancy. You can do it (teach it in your district) Nancy will come in & help you B/T with PDP

- Videotaped New Teachers & Mentors can look together to help the PDP Goal Setting process
- Reaffirming with the standards
- Is it important to have a sharing area? All yes. Honor this and share.
- Lots of work
- Share out
- It's a big whoosh to cover differentiation
- Mentor gather info on students w/ BT
- To teach BT teachers to give strategies the sort is based off content, process, and product. Uses strategy ideas

Controlling/Facilitating Confidentiality? – Teacher to teacher

- That's a tough one!
- What's said at meeting, stays at meeting. (3 resp)
- We don't discuss specific mentoring situations/problems as a group – that would be handled in self-reflective time
- Review norms – staff asks head facilitator w/ question via phone/email, etc.

How are you assessing the mentor forums (effectiveness)?

- Survey & CAL
- Survey
- Not for mal. We use questions at the end of each session
- Reflection time at end of session. Best part – we need more
- We're not formally tracking anything
- Exit survey
- Evaluations at each meeting

How do mentors collaborate as a group with other mentors? Processes used to guide this collaboration?

Other strategies? Structure to create collaboration?

- Once a semester, a time (half of the meeting) is set aside for mentors only
- Small group of 4 mentors is considered the 'core': email, 1x per month dialogues, informal discussion as needs arise. We have been to many mentor trainings together, which also helped develop the habit of collaboration
- Only through SEWNTF training; no formal collaboration structure
- By site informally
- Look over mentoring strategies and use in planning. Adapt mentoring strategies for use between mentors. Example: CAL & use 4 corners
- No formal collaboration other than mentoring meetings
- Collaboration at/during our mentor cohort sessions

How do you find time in meetings for specific problem solving with mentor (without using whole meeting time)?

- Facilitator sets and controls the discussions, offering future time (individual or group).
- We do problem-solving on a particular topic & fill out CAL as part of reflection
- We put a set time in the agenda for concerns (before new learning)
- Connecting, learning, managing: Work the plan, allocate time for each section w/in 1 hr timeframe (2 resp)
- Set aside time

Do you have a budget for mentor forums?

- No budget (3 resp)
- No, but I bribe everyone with Starbucks gift cards!

- Use part of Title IIA \$\$
- We get supplies (& snacks) through Central Office. We can put in for pay for leading mtgs.
- Not other than 2 hours built into stipend... Lead mentor facilitation is considered professional development
- Yes

How do you plan for succession of roles?

- What a great question!
- Plans to keep current... 4 designees
- We don't
- Haven't yet
- I try to allow my co-lead mentor as much limelight as possible, so other teachers know the program is a grass roots, teacher led one. This also allows others to develop as leaders
- No plan

How often are mentor forums held?

- Once a semester
- TBD
- Flexible, flexible, flexible... We try every other month to once a quarter
- 5 times year
- 1 x per month
- Every other month (am or pm)
- 1 per semester

How do you move other mentors forward in their practice?

- Personal contact and encouragement
- The forums can help this. Refresher for some/encouragement for others.
- The forum (mtg) help – They know there is a 'learning component' for each session
- Mentors complete CALs as reflection at each meeting
- Mentor attendance @ in-district BT workshops facilitated by lead mentors
- Forums help

How are lead mentors compensated for participating in the mentor support process?

- Lead mentor is not compensated for lead mentor role
- Zip, zero, nada, but can count the time for professional development hours
- Hourly time slips
- Working on getting this into the 'Schedule C' – such as Coaching/Advisor positions. The Union President is joining our New Teacher Steering Committee!
- Professional growth hours (\$10/hr) for participants. Facilitator's pay (\$17.08/hr) for planning the forums (lead mentors)
- We can get prof growth hours (PIP) – new
- Standard district rate

How many BT & mentors are in your district?

- 17 mentors, 17 BTs
- 17 mentors, 30+ BTs
- 4 of each plus a crew of collegial coaches
- 4 mentors, 9 BTs
- BT(1) 7 ment 7; BT(2) 9 ment 9
- Over 100 mentors (not all mentoring). We average 20 BTs per semester

How to increase attendance and consistent participation (voluntary/mandatory)

- Mandatory, but offer food, too
- Mandatory; use the buddy system to remind each other. We hold the Forums the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fri of each month
- Mandatory, different days of week & differing times

- Voluntary (professional growth hours) participants, food, lead teachers facilitate (teacher-teacher)
- Now a part of our Professional In-service Plan (PIP) Extra hours we put in per contract
- Required attendance... dates established @ beginning of school year... built into stipend... FOOD ☺
- I'd like to know this!

What professional literature is being used?

- Monthly newsletter w/ a prof. article attached
- Reiterating what we have earned @ Stritch seminars
- Reiterating what we have earned @ Stritch seminars (we modify them to meet our needs)
- Used lit from conferences and seminars
- Copies of handouts from Lead Mentor Forums

For those who are not administrators, what authority do you have/exercise?

- Informal – I have the most training/have been w/ the Stritch program the longest and have more flexibility in my regular position. I also have the most experience with staff development.
- None! (2 resp)
- Another great question!
- An advisory position (not administrative/authoritative)

How are lead mentors determined? (1 bldg, full release, etc.) What's your model?

- Whoever volunteers
- Volunteer
- ED690 first training (by building 4-6)
- Completed mentor program (certified/experienced); recommended by administrators who know mentor qualification data
- 1 lead mentor selected by superintendant, adopted SEWNTP lead mentor interim
- 2 Lead Mentors
- Chosen by administration

Forum topics – how do you choose topics? What are your forum topics?

- Needs identified by survey, repeat individual requests, hot topics, WTS
- P/T conferences, grading practices, coaching, use of CAL
- Copy Rhonda and Nancy from previous LM forum
- Based on needs and topics that match new teacher needs throughout each quarter: Parent Communication/Climate (1<sup>st</sup> quarter); Analyzing student work (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter)
- Problem solving, connect PD goals to mentoring & Standards Continuum
- Best guess this first year
- Mentors did @ mtg (on-the-spot. Then we did 4 corners discussion/problem solving based on what the mentors' needs were
- Surveys are taken at first couple of meetings each year

Next step – reviewed them that workshop coming up

- Have resources ready – online, hard copy – gather resources (ready to go w/ bags) so BT can shop with their Mentors. Then review schedule.
- Where can this become a mentor forum – keep nudging your mentors forward. 3 hours or a workshop

Professional Development for Mentors: a Facilitator's Guide for Induction Program Leaders, \$250, order from [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org). The book goes through things that you may need for mentors mentoring mentees. Topics include – Administrating – Mentors' Concerns – Lots of good stuff

Next

- Take the article with you and read it
- Appreciate one new idea. Look at bullets
- Find something you're doing & think about it

- Ask any questions & then move on.
- Use & consider responses to article (smallest part of time together)
- Co-facilitate – even if Rhonda can't be around. Change all the time. Build capacity with group. It would be great to co-facilitate w/ even more than one person. Co-facilitation is beautiful because you can critique each other.
- Points to consider in speaking about Mentors & fidelity – If a district is getting paid \$\$ they want to know what it is they do; Formative Assessment as Mentors' Practices, helping them be good mentors
- May 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> – Class to develop good mentors. A morning session – much more facilitating, mentor selection & tools to build mentors
- Start thinking about how to support mentors & goal setting, like PDP w/ teachers.

After forums in May, looking for commitment to hold 4 forums on mentor accountability.

If districts commit, Rhonda and Tom will teach it.

- Mentors set a goal, then in winter self assess how they're doing, and where they need to go from there.
- It would be a commitment of 4 meetings to work around goal setting – accountability.
- Lead mentors would help mentor with working toward goals that have been set
- Costs to cover – For every mentor you will need a continuum & packets
- ½ day in August w/ Rhonda & Tom