Support Package for Mentors of Graduate Teachers in Secondary Schools

It is right that we encourage, identify and celebrate good teaching as a profession; that we hold up models of exemplary teaching practice in the public domain; and that we publicly acknowledge people who are outstanding practitioners of the art and craft of teaching.

(Norman McCulla, 2007)

Thankyou to those who volunteer as mentors!

VIT Mentor Day 1 Training Days for 2011:
February 15 (Tuesday) - Horsham
February 24 (Thursday) - Warrnambool
February 28 (Monday) - Ballarat
March 8 (Tuesday) - Mildura
March 10 (Thursday) - Swan Hill

It is recommended that all Mentors who have not trained within the previous three years attend whichever of these days fits best with school diaries. Registration is through the VIT website: www.vit.vic.edu.au

Please don’t hesitate to consult other leadership members in the school, or the CEO Education Officer, if you require support in your role as a mentor, or if you believe that your mentee requires further support.

Education Officer - Secondary Curriculum - Anne Doody - Mob. 0407 340 599
adoody@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au
# Should I become a Mentor? - a checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities conducive to successful mentoring</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I see myself as being people oriented; I like and enjoy working with other professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a good listener and respect my colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sensitive to the needs and feelings of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise when others need support or independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to contribute to the professional development of others and share what I have learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to find reward in service to someone who needs my assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to support and help without smothering, parenting or taking charge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see myself generally as flexible and willing to adjust my personal schedule to meet the needs of someone else</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually am patient and tolerant when teaching someone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am confident and secure in my knowledge of the field and make an effort to remain up-to-date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the subjects I teach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I set high standards for myself and my students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use a variety of teaching methods and strategies and my students achieve well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others look to me for information about my subject matter and methods of teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the importance of assessment as a component of planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the importance of maintaining student records</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the importance of completing my work program and keeping it up to date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognise the importance of religious Education in the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that we are all teachers of Religion in the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I see myself as a competent professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am able to offer assistance in areas that give others problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to explain things at various levels of complexity and detail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others are interested in my professional ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Top Ten Tasks of a Mentor:

The following list, collected from Australian first-year and experienced teachers and leaders, suggests the kinds of activities that trained mentors might undertake.

All mentors may:

- Provide an orientation to the school focusing on the classrooms and students, school layout, resources and staff contacts and community and district resources.
- Inform teachers of local school policies and expectations of teachers in the school and the community.
- Help new teachers locate needed school and classroom resources, equipment and services for setting up their classrooms and programs.
- Set aside time to regularly meet with teachers to discuss joint work, the students and team responsibilities.
- Be a one-to-one coach and staff developer for teachers, when asked, by helping to reflect, analyse and evaluate ideas and experiences; develop and demonstrate solutions to problems; and develop the learning and confidence of teachers.
- Be a current resource in identifying useful educational research and practices and model these practices to help improve the school’s student learning and teaching.
- Model effective instructional practices and openness to feedback about their teaching and its impact on student learning.
- Facilitate other experiences with networks outside the school to meet other teachers and mentors in surrounding schools or programs.
- Use agreed and invited classroom visits and observation for identified coaching sessions to help (graduate) teachers gain feedback and discuss their own teaching and development.
- Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program and how it can be improved.

(Salzman, J. 2003. Becoming a Mentor: Are you the right one for the Job? p. 10 - 11)
A Personal Ethos for the 21st Century Mentor

As you continue the journey of mentoring at your school, it is time to reflect on the reason for participating in this program, both professionally and personally. If one of the reasons is to improve the quality of learning and teaching in your school, then consider the following. Take the time to discuss your thoughts with not only the PRT, but other teachers in the school. How do your thoughts compare with what some would argue should be the emphasis in education for the 21st century?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect/approach</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Learning for the 21st Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Imposed</td>
<td>Negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistakes</td>
<td>Should not be made</td>
<td>To be learned from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>Profiles and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of World</td>
<td>Right - Wrong</td>
<td>Uncertainty/Shades of grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Supervisory board</td>
<td>Local needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffed by</td>
<td>Subject expert</td>
<td>Cross-curricula team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Theory to practice</td>
<td>Practice to theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Content - driven</td>
<td>Process – driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Teacher - centred</td>
<td>Student – centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher role</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Fellow – learner/facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Knowing that</td>
<td>Knowing how and why and how to find out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student activity</td>
<td>Working alone</td>
<td>Working collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Competitive against others</td>
<td>Striving for personal best against standards/criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student role</td>
<td>Passive/receptive</td>
<td>Active/generative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning experiences</td>
<td>Programmed</td>
<td>Flexible/opportunity guided by framework of outcomes and learners’ interests/needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOPING RAPPORT WITH AND TRUST BETWEEN MENTOR AND PRT

Together, the Mentor Teacher and PRT can:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Communicate</th>
<th>Listen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

However, prior to these actions occurring they must have established rapport and trust:

**Plan:**
- How frequently will you meet? (Recommend weekly in first term, fortnightly second term and negotiated, but regular, for remainder of first year)
- When, where and at what time?
- What format will these meetings take?
- Who is responsible for these meetings, will this change over time?
- Has a timeline regarding issues, school events been drawn up?
- What action will be taken if either person is dissatisfied with the process?
- Who will take issues further that are school related?
- Has a procedure been put in place for the PRT to tackle issues or are you expecting the MT to have/give all the answers?

**Document:**
- How will minutes of these meetings be kept?
- What follow-up will occur based on these minutes?
- How will the PRT keep a record of issues that are of concern?
- How will the Mentor present information to the PRT?
- Has an evaluation procedure been drawn up to review the benefits of the Mentor/ PRT relationship.

**Communication Skills:** Some brief thoughts

‘The greatest need of the human soul is to be understood’

Without doubt communication is the most important skill in life.

We primarily use four forms of communication - **reading, writing, speaking & listening**. How many people in the population have had formal and systematic training in listening skills? Compare the amount of time you have spent in learning to read, write and speak, with your training time in listening.
The fundamental principle in effective listening is to firstly **try to understand**, and **then be understood**. We all have a natural tendency to listen with the intent to **REPLY**, not understand the issue from the others’ perspective. We also have a natural tendency to project our home video onto the other person's experience - "the same thing happened to me."

It may benefit both the PRT and Mentor to consult information regarding active listening and questioning at: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_88.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_88.htm)

The information on the website can be beneficial in the classroom as well as collegial relationships.

Good communication skills require a high level of self-awareness. By understanding your personal style of communicating, you will go a long way towards creating good and lasting impressions with others.

### A Checklist on Empathic Listening Attitudes and Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have the attitude and intention to discover as accurately as possible the other person’s feelings, wants and thoughts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I systematically apply reflecting skills and empathic listening in my personal and professional life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I have a win - win attitude.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am secure enough in my own position to release attachment from my attitudes and positions to seek to understand the other’s position. If I am defending my own position I can’t understand the other’s position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am open to the possibility that other perspectives exist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I do not advise, cross-examine, interpret and evaluate from my experience, which would impose my life experience on the other person’s experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I accurately reflect back to the other person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I focus on feelings as well as words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I am sensitive to non-verbal cues in discovering feelings and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
meanings.

(DEET 2004 Mentor Program)
FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving constructive feedback can be amongst the most challenging interactions in the mentoring relationship. To ensure that feedback becomes a relationship-building experience for all stakeholders, we need a sound mindset and techniques that observe the principles previously outlined.

When providing feedback, the focus is on assisting the other person to build their own journey to improve their practice. It is a coaching situation and may be assisted by the utilization of the GROW model to identify what the PRT wants to achieve and how they can make it happen. GROW stands for:

- **GOALS** - What do you want to achieve?
- **REALITY** - What is the present situation?
- **OPTIONS** - What are the possibilities?
- **WILL** - What will you do? When will you do it?

When identifying the **GOALS**, it is helpful to base them on the SMART goal setting approach:

- **S** - Specific and stretching
- **M** - Measurable
- **A** - Achievable
- **R** - Realistic
- **T** - Time framed


To ensure that feedback becomes a relationship-building experience for all participants, a framework is needed that includes the following:

- Clarify the purpose in giving the feedback;
- Describe what you have observed - the behaviour and actions and the impact of this behaviour;
- Use open ended questions to elicit a comment or response;
- There may be a need for a solution; it may also only be an opportunity for a reflective conversation with improvement in mind but not a specific solution.
Teacher Mentor Support Training provides the following as positive lead-ins to fruitful conversations:

**Expose assumptions**
- Please tell me a little more about...
- Help me to understand that idea...
- What you are saying here is...
- Can you give me an example to help me understand...?
- To what extent...?
- So, you are suggesting...
- I’m curious about...

**Promote thinking**
- What might you see happening if...?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- How did you decide / come to that conclusion?
- Have you thought about...?
- What results did you expect?

**Consider alternatives**
- How can I learn from this?
- How can I approach this problem flexibly?
- How might I look at the situation in another way?
- How can I draw on my repertoire of problem solving strategies?
- How can I look at this problem from a fresh perspective?
- How can I illuminate this problem to make it clearer, more precise?
- How might I break this problem down into its component parts and develop a strategy for understanding and accomplishing each step?
- What do I know or not know?
- What questions do I need to ask?
- What strategies are in my mind now?
- What am I aware of in term of my own beliefs, values and goals with this problem?
- What feelings or emotions am I aware of which might be blocking or enhancing my progress?
- How can we solve it together?
- What can I learn from others that would help me to become a better problem solver?

These can be useful for both collegial and teacher-student conferences to promote feedback conversations through which both parties can learn.

Teacher Mentoring Support: A learning guide for mentors; DEECD; 2008
Checklist 1- Leadership Support for Graduate teachers
After Appointment of Employment - Secondary

☐ Advise whether the Graduate teacher is expected to meet with the Parish Priest to introduce themselves
☐ Provide a staff handbook, school profile, parent handbook
☐ Provide a list of all staff and their teaching areas or support role – introduce them to those who they will come in contact with regularly
☐ Discuss the Beginning Teacher/Induction Program– what the normal procedure is and ask if there is any additional support that the Graduate Teacher would like
☐ Appoint a VIT knowledgeable Mentor to assist the new teacher
☐ Is the Graduate teacher sure about their teaching responsibilities?
   Classes and sizes
   Number of integrated students
   Cultural background of students
   Length of time any newly arrived students have been in Australia
   Any students with illness eg asthma
   Student profiles / records that support knowing students
☐ Ensure they know which classrooms they will most likely teach in and what arrangements are made regarding keys and security
☐ Provide a copy of the school Vision and Mission statements and policies on ‘Pastoral Care’ and ‘Teaching and Learning’.
☐ Advise which areas of the curriculum are supported by specialist teachers
☐ Advise whether there is an integration aide employed to work with integration students in the Graduate Teacher’s classes. Provide details, frequency and procedures
☐ Provide details of who the curriculum co-ordinators and faculty / domain leaders in the school are
☐ Discuss whether staff members are welcome / encouraged to drop into the school during the last weeks of the holidays
☐ Inform Graduate teachers of the security arrangements for the school
☐ Advise what resources are available to the Graduate teacher on a day to day basis. Where/ who do they access them through?
☐ Take the Graduate Teacher to visit the Resource Centre / Library – make them known to the staff there and organize access for them personally, and check through procedures for class use and copyright
☐ Discuss computer access across the school for staff and students and the report process that the Graduate teacher will be expected to undertake during the first semester
Checklist 2 - Leadership Support Before Employment
Begins - Secondary

- Provide a copy of last year’s work program for each subject that the Graduate teacher will teach.
- Discuss daily routine ie when does school begin, recess times, lunch time, end of day, bus routines etc.
- Provide duty rosters – before school, recess, lunchtime and after school - and ensure the Graduate / New Teacher understands their responsibilities with these.
- Provide copies of policies/procedures on:
  - Teacher Code of Conduct (VIT and/or school documents)
  - Student Code of Conduct /Behaviour Management
  - Pastoral Care
  - First Aid
  - Reporting Accidents
  - Giving Medication to students
  - Homework
  - Timetabling of specialist areas
  - Parental Access
  - Student access to classrooms
  - Lunch arrangements
  - Use of school grounds
  - Collection and recording of monies/notes etc
  - Car Parking
  - Morning Tea Money

- Use of coffee cups – does each staff member bring their own?

- Direct to school documentation on Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Australian Curriculum, discuss how this is implemented and if there is a cycle of topics followed.
- Provide a copy of Awakenings the school Religious Education program and discuss how this is implemented.
- Discuss whether the school implements any specific learning programs such as Inquiry Learning, Habits of Mind etc?

- Discuss tuck-shop / canteen procedures, location and times of access.
- Discuss when assemblies are and how often are they held. Explain the routine for assemblies.
- Explain and provide examples of what is expected in terms of:
  - Documenting Work Program / Class activities
  - Maintaining Attendance Rolls
  - Assessment procedures / Maintaining records on progress
- Explain the arrangements for duplicating material required in teaching. Provide photocopy pin numbers etc.
- Explain the school rules regarding the absence of students from school grounds and which areas are out of bounds.
- Discuss the arrangements for the collection of students at times outside the normal dismissal times.
- Check that Graduate Teachers are clear about which yard duties they have.
- Discuss the extreme weather procedures (wet/hot days)
- Check class lists for any alterations with the Graduate Teacher.
- Provide spelling and pronunciation of student’s names & discuss having a strategy to assist in memorising student names.
- Discuss materials needed for the first teaching days, and having some back up plans for sudden changes / unexpected occurrences.
- Provide information regarding what materials students can be expected to have with them for particular subjects, ie. What was listed on the booklist.
- Provide copies of the class time-tables.
- Discuss whether there are any policies on pin-up spaces and / or sticking materials on windows / walls.
- Encourage attractive and meaningful displays in classrooms.
- Explain who is responsible for keeping the classroom tidy – vacuumed/dusted etc.
- Check the physical layout of the classrooms – are there sufficient desks/chairs/storage for the class’ needs?
- Discuss having plenty of materials and activities planned for the first days of school- share usual materials / strategies
- Explain any staffroom responsibilities – wash up duties etc.
- Discuss resources available to teachers on a day to day basis. Advise who to access them through.
- Explain who is responsible for setting up email addresses and/or assist the Graduate Teacher to do so.
- Meetings the Graduate Teacher is expected to attend.
- Special leave processes – Sick Leave, Bereavement Leave, Graduation Day Leave etc.
- Discuss professional dress expectations.