



COVER SHEET

Hudson, Peter and Millwater, Jan (2007) Mentoring for effective teaching of writing in the primary school. In Proceedings *Australian Teacher Education Association*, Wollongong.

Accessed from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>

Mentoring for effective teaching of writing in the primary school

Peter Hudson & Jan Millwater
Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

Effective mentoring in English is considered paramount to a preservice teacher's development as it presents real-life contexts for pedagogical understandings. This study provided qualitative data (questionnaire) and quantitative data (survey) on 24 mentors' perceptions of their mentoring for teaching English and in particular teaching writing. These mentors are cooperating teachers who had mentored second-year preservice teachers (mentees) from one Australian university. Qualitative data indicated that developing a good rapport in a mentor-mentee relationship keeps lines of communication open in order to assist the mentee's learning. In addition, the mentor's modelling of teaching writing, demonstrating specific writing strategies, and providing positive yet constructive feedback were considered successful mentoring strategies, while a mentee's lack of content knowledge, inadequate personal writing skills, and not knowing how to multi-task with many students may contribute towards a mentee feeling unsuccessful as a writing teacher. Mentors advocated methods for enhancing mentoring practices, which included university-facilitated professional development, linking syllabus content and teaching approaches, and sharing pedagogical content knowledge with colleagues. The quantitative data presented mentors' perceptions of their attributes and practices across five factors for mentoring (i.e., Personal Attributes, System Requirements, Pedagogical Knowledge, Modelling, and Feedback) with 67% or more of these mentors ($n=24$) agreeing or strongly agreeing they provided all the 34 items associated with the survey. The factor System Requirements had the lowest percentage range (67-71%) while Feedback had the highest range (83-100%). However, mentees may not agree with their mentors' perspectives, hence, further research comparing the two perspectives may lead towards targeting more effective approaches for mentoring the teaching of writing.

The response to the demands for better teaching of reading, writing, and mathematics (the 3Rs) has increased in Australia (Adkins, Grant, Summerville, Barnett, & Buys, 2003), and in literacy and numeracy the advocacy for improvement has been such that schools and states have scripted standards and testing towards these ends (Reid, 2005). Preservice teacher education appears to be a starting point for feeding reform measures into education systems, and tertiary education has a fundamental role for which it needs to draw upon practical and professional experiences in the field of teaching to connect current theories. Hence, the quality of input from current teachers in their roles as mentors will be paramount to the development of preservice teachers' practical skills for advancing pedagogical practices in the 3Rs.

A return to teaching the basics and an attempt to relieve the estimate that a high percentage of students leave school without acquiring functional literacy (Lievesley & Motivans, 2000), does not mean returning to traditional ways of inspections and reports on teachers. Research into professional development has wrought more strategies for upskilling teachers for which mentoring has been very effective in accomplishing change in teachers and their work (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Kochan & Pascarelli, 2003).

In the mid 1990s, the American Association of Teacher Education analysed data from a survey of teacher educators, school teachers and university and school administrators that identified mentoring as the most critical strategy for professional developing teachers (Anderson, 1992). International educators in the USA and the UK at the time (Bey & Homes, 1990, 1992; MacIntyre, Hagger & Wilkin, 1993) reported that mentoring should be the most common response to the school-based learning needs of beginning teachers. Policy makers as early as 1990 – The Schools Council Report: Australia's Teachers - acknowledge that mentoring helped with careers and friendships but could also advance the pedagogical knowledge of recipients. Mentoring has become more widespread within specific curriculum areas. Researchers have investigated mentoring in global perspectives (Kochan et al., 2003; Cullingford, 2006); in school contexts (Carr, Herman & Harris, 2005; Fletcher, 2000), with teachers, preservice and first-year teachers (Cox, 2004; Hurst & Reading, 2002; Podson & Denmark, 2000), and within specific disciplines (e.g., Hudson, 2004) to show that mentoring can scaffold learning across any field. Below we have drawn upon and emphasised generic mentoring attributes and practices to investigate mentoring in a specific field, namely, learning how to teach writing. Mentoring in this sense can be called a pedagogy of colleagues.

Mentoring is acknowledged as a tool for professional transformation and gives credence to the relationship basis of the mentee (preservice teacher) and mentor (cooperating classroom teacher). Mentors whether they are appointed mentors, buddy mentors or peer mentors must build and maintain a relationship with the purpose of creating a psychological climate of trust (Jipson & Paley, 2000; Zhao & Reed in Kochan et al., 2003). This in turn leads to the intuitive acceptance of modelled attitudes and practices (Fletcher, 2002; Podson & Denmark, 2000). Questions, responses and interactive feedback must be carefully framed for sharing honest reflections on practices and to keep respect within this relationship (Cox, 2004). Without developing a mentor-mentee rapport, there is no connection to each other and transformation rarely occurs. The emphasis on the relationship within mentoring is the main distinction from its close but suspect neighbour, "supervision", which often implies no modelling of practice, a more distant relationship, and a key purpose of "performance assessment". Supervision by contrast is stigmatised by its imbued imbalance of "power."

If the relationship is shared democratically then mentees are empowered and open to reconstructing practice or their theoretical frameworks rather than alienated from the task of reframing their own teacher identity or being so fearful of making a transition to a safer place of operation. This is especially noted in preservice and beginning teachers (Podson & Denmark, 2000) in the teaching of writing or other subjects. A mentee's development in learning to teach writing should be equally based with the mentor as co-learners with the classroom students. Therefore, mentoring may be easily adapted one step further, that is, into the application of teaching performance. Conferencing and conversing (communication skills) are integral to mentoring processes (Fletcher, 2000; Millwater & Short, 1999; Routman, 2000) with the appropriate channel of communication as the main instructional conduit (Hurst & Reading, 2002).

Successful mentoring programs should have a balanced amount of structure to suit individual needs within the partnership. If there is too little structure then initial enthusiasm wanes, participants ask, *What are we supposed to do?*; meetings are little more than a nice chat; disillusionment occurs; and the loosely-structured mentor-mentee partnership does not achieve goals. On the other hand, if there is too much structure then preservice teachers often comment that mentoring feels contrived and stifled with too much paperwork, and excessive reporting and rules inhibit the relationship, wasting valuable time (Fletcher, 2000). Most importantly, mentoring must be flexible to address the mentee's needs, but this will require mentors to have an understanding of specific mentoring practices favoured by current literature.

Preservice teachers can improve their performance skills through critical reflection for improving practices (Mullen, 2000; Tillman, 2000). Comparing and contrasting new and old lessons and observations of lessons are often fruitful activities if guided by an astute mentor (Podson & Denmark, 2000). Yet, a lack of communication can create problems for developing mentees' understanding and knowledge of a subject (e.g., writing). The confrontative function (Cohen, 1995) of the mentor must be used to address problems directly. This honest and critical support is a bonus and generally welcomed by the mentee and/or the mentor (Carr et al., 2005; Cox, 2000). Indeed, collaboration and open communication can overcome most problems (Carr et al., 2005).

The purpose of this literature was to assist in understanding that the following inquiry investigates how the various components of effective mentoring could be used to support the professional development of teachers in their roles as mentors. The generic components of the mentoring process as explored were used to frame opportunities for mentoring preservice teachers in the teaching of writing. The aim of this study was to determine mentors' perceptions of their practices for mentoring their preservice teachers' development as teachers of writing. Appendix 1 outlines mentors' attributes and practices for mentoring preservice teachers in this specific field.

Data collection methods and analysis

The mentors in this study are cooperating teachers who had mentored second-year preservice teachers (mentees) from one Australian university. This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The qualitative data collection involved mentors' ($n=24$) written responses to statements and questions related to their mentoring of preservice teachers for learning how to teach writing. These statements and questions included: Explain your rapport with the mentee while mentoring writing. What mentoring strategies do you think helped the mentee to feel successful with teaching writing? Were there any mentoring aspects you think made the mentee feel unsuccessful

with teaching writing? What do you think may enhance your mentor skills in writing? Data were transcribed and coded for commonalities (see Hittleman & Simon, 2002).

A five-factor model for mentoring has previously been identified, namely, Personal Attributes, System Requirements, Pedagogical Knowledge, Modelling, and Feedback (Hudson, 2003). These five factors and items associated with each factor have been justified statistically with the literature (see Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005) and form the basis for the survey instrument used in this study. Hence, quantitative data was collected through this survey instrument (Appendix 1) and analysed using SPSS (a statistical analysis package) for means, standard deviations, and percentages across the above five factors for mentoring.

Context for study

Participants in this study involved 24 mentors (male=5, female=19) associated with an Australian university. The mentors' ages varied (38% between 22 - 29 years; 38% between 30 - 39 years, and 25% between 40-49 years), as did their experiences for mentoring (42% had mentored between 4 to 9 mentees, 50% had mentored more than 10 mentees, while for 8% this was their first mentee). All mentors except one completed at least one English methodology unit at tertiary level with 87% completing two or more units. Finally, 88% agreed or strongly agreed that English writing was one of their strongest teaching subjects, and 92% demonstrated at least one English writing lesson to their mentees, including 42% who had demonstrated 4 or more lessons.

Results and discussion

The following provides qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data focuses on mentors' perspectives about: (1) the importance of developing a good rapport in a mentoring relationship; (2) mentoring strategies that may make the mentee feel successful; (3) practices that may make the mentee feel unsuccessful; and, (4) suggestions for enhancing mentoring practices. The quantitative data focuses on the five factors for mentoring, namely, Personal Attributes, System Requirements, Pedagogical Knowledge, Modelling, and Feedback.

The importance of developing a good rapport

Establishing a good rapport in a mentor-mentee relationship can aid in facilitating teaching practices, and it is important that the "lines of communication are always open" (Mentor 20). In this study, it was claimed that part of developing a rapport relied on the mentee's "confidence for discussing ideas and experiences" (Mentor 3). Yet, six mentors believed they did not have a good rapport with their mentees while mentoring writing, mainly "because of the mentee's attitude" (Mentor 18). Most mentors ($n=13$) expressed their rapport with their mentees in terms of the mentee's enthusiasm or willingness for developing teaching practices, particularly if they were "receptive to suggestions and willing to try new ideas" (Mentor 24). Three mentors recognised the value of learning from each other as a result of a good mentor-mentee relationship, for example, "Lots of information to share – teacher also learned new information" (Mentor 21). Mentor 8 suggested she had to contribute significantly towards developing a rapport with her mentee: "My latest mentee was very structured in her approach and needed lots of coaxing to try different approaches".

Mentoring strategies that may make the mentee feel successful

Mentors wrote about their mentoring strategies they believed helped their mentees to feel successful with teaching writing. Modelling effective teaching practices was the most prevalent strategy articulated by mentors in this study, including "a lot of observation

lessons for developing [the mentee's] understanding of how to teach writing" (Mentor 13). Other strategies reported by mentors involved more specific modelling strategies, to illustrate, "Modelling, being specific, I think it depends on the focus for teaching episodes. Graphic organisers, brainstorming ideas, modelling, stimulus pictures" (Mentor 15). Other specific mentoring practices included: "using criteria and set expectation sheets so [the mentee] knew what was expected" (Mentor 8), "Modelling good practice such as questioning, joint construction, guided writing and independent writing" (Mentor 14), and the "use of planning such as mind maps" (Mentor 5).

Further modelling was suggested as follows:

Set clear expectations, understanding curriculum and its needs, and developing confidence with own skills. (Mentor 17)

Modelling, shared development of lessons, scaffold planning, independent planning. (Mentor 19)

Observing lessons/looking at planning documents for that term so student could see the relevance and the need to teach these lessons. (Mentor 20)

Modelling strategies and then critically discussing them with mentee. Focusing on expected outcomes-making students aware of expectations (Mentor 21)

Getting the mentee to break down the genre for teaching and making an assessment tool before teaching the lesson. (Mentor 22)

Modelling different strategies and genres while explaining reasons for differing approaches. (Mentor 23)

Use web-modelling, writing introductions only, supportive material from reading schemes. (Mentor 24)

Mentor 11 suggested that any modelling would be beneficial to the mentee including "demonstrating a 'bad' lesson and comparing it to a well-planned successful lesson". However, providing "positive feedback, clearly presented feedback sheets for lessons, encouragement of risk-taking" (Mentor 4) were considered ways to make the mentee feel more successful. Mentor 18 claimed that mentoring can be very difficult when a mentee has a negative attitude. Indeed, as preservice teachers are only at the learning stages for teaching writing, confidence may be lacking which would require "a great deal of support and encouragement" (Mentor 10). Although it is most important for mentees to "have a go" (Mentor 7), "lots of practical examples and strategies such as visual literacy" (Mentor 3) can assist in facilitating success for the mentee.

Practices that may make the mentee feel unsuccessful

Each mentor was asked if there were any mentoring aspects they thought may have made the mentee feel unsuccessful with teaching writing. Mentoring generally occurs when there is time to talk to the mentee, which is usually outside classroom teaching times. It is important for mentees to understand that cooperating teachers in their roles as mentors may not have sufficient time for full involvement in the mentoring process, as there are unpredictable circumstances within active school settings that can distract a mentor, and the first and foremost priority is a student's health and safety. One mentor claimed that insufficient time for involvement in the mentoring process may lead to a mentee feeling unsuccessful as it could portray inadvertently non-commitment from the mentor.

Mentor 8 claimed that her mentee may have felt less successful for teaching writing as she lacked knowledge of “level 3 and level 4 outcomes”. This mentor explained that a lack of knowledge produced an “inability to articulate to students what she expected”. Mentor 6 also stated that a mentee would feel more successful with an understanding of the “Student levels associated with syllabus requirements and the low socio-economic clientele”. Three mentors pointed towards their mentees’ inadequate preparation, that is, “unprepared by the university training and background” (Mentor 10). While Mentor 11 wrote, “Not discussing aims of teaching writing and not discussing syllabus documents with the mentee” may produce unsuccessful feelings.

Teaching is an all-consuming occupation, particularly as teachers generally deal with more than one “client” at any one time, unlike the luxuries afforded in other professions. Hence, unsuccessful feelings may come from the voluminous task of catering for all students within a lesson, to illustrate, “I think the mentee became aware of how difficult it can be to attend to all students when writing and give suitable feedback” (Mentor 12). Although it is very difficult to determine what may cause a mentee to feel unsuccessful from a mentor’s perspective, other suggestions included, “a weakness in the management of completed work and reluctant students” (Mentor 21). The competency with basic skills may also lead to a lack of confidence, for example, “Background knowledge of grammar, punctuation/spelling etc. always plays a part when confidence is discussed” (Mentor 20). In addition, a lack of basic skills may impede the mentee’s success for teaching writing, for example, Mentor 24 stated the mentee needed skills in “Handwriting on the blackboard”. Another also claimed that there tended to be a “focus on teaching skills rather than content due to weaknesses of intern’s teaching practices” (Mentor 19).

Suggestions for enhancing mentoring practices

Mentors responded with various suggestions on how they could enhance their own mentor skills and practices for a mentee’s learning to teach writing. These suggestions included: knowledge of a literature-based unit (Mentor 2) with understanding of the links between syllabus literate futures and approaches to teaching (Mentors 6, 12, 20); professional development from universities for the mentors (Mentors 4, 10, 14); conferencing strategies (Mentor 15); analyzing years 3, 5, and 7 writing skills tests and marking guides (Mentor 24); and, sharing strategies, approaches, content with colleagues (Mentors 7, 16, 21). It was strongly suggested by a few mentors that mentees “needed to have basic writing skills themselves” (e.g., Mentor 1). Finally, some mentors wanted more time with their mentees and longer practicum durations (e.g., Mentors 13, 22, 23).

Issues and concerns for practice

Some mentors had issues about the preservice teacher preparation for learning how to teach writing. The most prominent concern was the mentee’s content knowledge preparation, for example, “My mentee did not know how to effectively write lesson plans – the mentee’s own writing skills were average and at times had difficulty teaching subject matter they were not demonstrating themselves” (Mentor 1), and “Mentees do not have the necessary knowledge of individual student needs and capabilities. They also have to define expectations of students which mentees find difficult to ascertain and implement as a general rule” (Mentor 8). Yet, there were also concerns about ensuring mentees have basic understanding about school requirements in the subject area. To illustrate, “Our school has specific genre to be taught in each year level so any feedback applies to teaching note taking skills, information reports and visual presentation skills” (Mentor 4). Nevertheless, many of the concerns were “All are important but it can come down to time and experience and/or confidence with aspects of teaching writing” (Mentor 12).

Some mentees may have very limited pedagogical skills requiring significant mentor involvement: “I spent an inordinate amount of time assisting the mentee to understand the basic principles of teaching writing” (Mentor 16). Periodically, a mentee may be overconfident without ability, for instance, “I had a student [mentee] who was overly confident without the ability to analyse her own performance objectively. I feel that students and mentors require an extremely explicit list of standards and responsibilities” (Mentor 18). This call for more explicit standards was not uncommon among these mentors not only for the mentoring processes but also the responsibilities assigned to mentees for their preparation of learning how to teach writing: “I feel that students [mentees] should know how to break down a genre so they know what scaffolding to provide. They should also know how to do formal evaluation on writing such as assessment rubrics” (Mentor 22).

Timetabling writing lessons for mentees presented difficulties, particularly when writing lessons appear to “run over time” frequently. For instance:

A major difficulty is full completion of work both from a time aspect and from an understanding aspect. Students are always writing to a structure. There needs to be scope for writing as expression – just to tell the story or express feelings. This practice combined with knowledge of text types (and time to complete the task!) would enhance students’ own confidence and output (Mentor 21).

Mentors’ perceptions of their mentoring across five factors

A survey (Appendix 1) provided information about mentors’ perceptions on their specific mentoring attributes and practices across five factors, namely, Personal Attributes, System Requirements, Pedagogical Knowledge, Modelling, and Feedback. Surprisingly, 67% or more of these mentors ($n=24$) agreed or strongly agreed they provided all the 34 items associated with the survey (see Appendices 1 & 2). The factor System Requirements had the lowest percentage range (67-71%; Table 2, Appendix 2), while Feedback had the highest range (83-100%, Table 5, Appendix 2). Specific items that were recorded on the lowest percentage range include providing viewpoints about current teaching practices, and discussing aims, policies and problem solving for teaching writing (67%). It was interesting to note that 90% or more of mentors claimed they had provided mentoring practices on 16 items (Appendix 2). However, this perspective may not be related to the mentees’ perception of their mentoring in this subject area. Indeed, other research (Hudson, 2005) investigating mentees’ perceptions for science teaching indicated less than 25% of mentees agreed or strongly agreed their mentors provided the three practices associated with System Requirements. Further research to compare the two perspectives (mentors and mentees) may provide disparities between these two perspectives for teaching writing, which can lead towards a way for targeting mentoring processes more effectively.

Conclusion

This study indicated through qualitative and quantitative data mentors’ perceptions of their mentoring for teaching writing. The outcomes of this study showed the importance of: (1) developing collaborative and professional mentoring partnerships, (2) modelling the teaching of writing, and (3) providing constructive feedback on the mentee’s progress on teaching writing. Mentors confirmed the importance of developing a rapport in the mentor-mentee relationship in order to provide opportunities for the mentee to communicate. Yet, developing a congenial and professional relationship can require scaffolding and support from mentors, as they are the ones in a position of power with knowledge of the school culture, education system, and “ownership” of the classroom. Mentors will need to be perceptive on this balance of power and use strategies to encourage mentees to talk openly about teaching practices where necessary. Mentoring also requires flexibility in order to address a mentee’s specific needs.

Modelling teaching practices was articulated strongly by mentors as a way to demonstrate how to teach writing. Such modelling commences with planning using syllabus documents, organising resources, demonstrating knowledge on teaching strategies and text types, and connecting outcomes to assessments with thoughtfully designed rubrics. Mentees' observations of such practices must be purposeful with mentees identifying and deconstructing processes that lead to effective teaching. In addition, mentees may be able to develop their conceptions of effective practices whether mentors' modelling is effective or not (i.e., learning what to do and what not to do).

Finally, mentees may feel more successful when provided with constructive feedback that aims to build the mentee's confidence and performance. Mentors generally indicated a need for explicit standards in mentees' knowledge of writing structures before they enter a practicum. Consequently, successful practices for mentees need to include basic knowledge of grammar, text types, sentence structures, other writing components (e.g., metaphors, similes), and handwriting skills. Conversely, mentees may feel unsuccessful when mentors do not spend time discussing the teaching of writing. As mentees are new to the profession, they need to be aware of the limited time available to mentors, especially with the varied demands of planning, preparation, teaching (which is usually the majority of a school day), assessment, attending to duties, and communicating with parents, staff, and students. Nevertheless, mentors themselves acknowledged through the survey that they needed to improve on providing viewpoints about current teaching practices, and discussing aims, policies and problem solving techniques for teaching writing. Developing these mentoring practices may be facilitated through university handbooks for mentors and professional development programs. In addition, mentees need to have realistic expectations about their mentors' time, and focus on their own development of writing knowledge and skills before entering a professional school experience. Mentees may not agree with their mentors' perspectives, hence, further research comparing the two perspectives may lead towards targeting more effective approaches for mentoring the teaching of writing.

References

- Adkins, B., Grant, E., Summerville, J., Barnett, K., & Buys, L. (2003, November). *Community and learning for the new economy*. Paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- Anderson, C. (1992). *Visions of change: A report of the clinical schools project*. ERIC Clinical Schools Clearinghouse, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Washington, D.C.
- Bey, T.M., & Holmes, C.T. (Eds.). (1990). *Mentoring: Developing successful new teachers*. Reston Va: Association of Teacher Educators.
- Bey, T.M., & Holmes, C.T. (Eds.). (1992). *Mentoring: Contemporary principles and issues*. Reston Va: Association of Teacher Educators.
- Bunday, M.C., & Kelly, J.A. (1996) National Board Certification and the Teaching Profession's Commitment to Quality Assurance, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(3), 215-19.
- Carr, J.F., Herman, N., & Harris, D.E. (2005). *Creating dynamic schools through mentoring, coaching, and collaboration*. CA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Cohen, N.H. (1995). *Mentoring adult learners: A guide for educators and trainers*. Malabar, FL: Krieger.

- Cox, R. (2004). *The mentoring spirit of the teacher. Inspiration, support and guidance for aspiring and practising teacher-mentors*. New Zealand: Essential Resources.
- Cullingford, C. (2006). *Mentoring in education: An international perspective*. England: Ashgate Publishing.
- Fletcher, S. (2000). *Mentoring in schools*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2000). Mentoring in the new millenium *Theory into Practice*, 39(1), 50-56.
- Hudson, P. (2003). Mentoring first-year preservice teachers. *Action in Teacher Education: The Journal of the Association of Teacher Educators*, 15(3), 91-99.
- Hudson, P. (2004). Subject-specific mentoring for developing primary teaching practices. *International Journal of Practical Experiences in Professional Education*, 8(2), 18-28.
- Hudson, P., Skamp, K., & Brooks, L. (2005). Development of an instrument: Mentoring for effective primary science teaching. *Science Education*, 89(4), 657-674.
- Hurst, B., & Reading, G. (2002). *Teachers mentoring teachers*. Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Jipson, J., & Paley, N. (2000). Because no-one gets there alone: Collaboration as co-mentoring. *Theory into Practice*, 39(1), 36-42.
- Kochan, F.K., & Pascarella, J.T. (Eds.). (2003). *Global perspectives on mentoring. Transforming contexts, communities, and cultures*. USA: Information Age.
- Lievesley, D., & Motivans, A. (2000). *Taking literacy seriously*. Retrieved 6 January, 2006, from http://www.uis.unesco.org/en/news/news_p/news8.htm.
- McIntyre, D., Hagger, H., & Wilkin, M. (Eds.). (1993). *Mentoring: Perspectives on school-based teacher education*. London: Kogan Page.
- Miller, A. (2002). *Mentoring students and young people: A handbook of effective practice*. London: Kogan Page.
- Millwater, J., & Short, J. (1999). *A quick guide to mentoring, facilitating and coaching*. from Building Partnership Retrieved 20 March, 2007, from <https://olt.qut.edu.au/udf/TPP/sec/index.cfm>
- Mullan, C.A. (2000). Constructing co-mentoring partnership: Walkways we must travel. *Theory into Practice*, 39(1), 4-11.
- Podsen, I.J., & Denmark, V.M. (2000). *Coaching & mentoring. First-year & student teachers*. New York: Eye on Education.
- Routman, R. (2000). *Conversations*. Portsmouth, N.H. Heinneeman.
- Reid, A. (2005). *Rethinking national curriculum collaboration: Towards an Australian curriculum*. Canberra: Australia Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Tillman, B.A. (2000). Quiet leadership: Informal mentoring of beginning teachers. *Momentum*, 31(1), 24-36.

Mentoring for Teaching Writing

The following statements focus on mentoring for teaching writing during your mentee's (student teacher's) last field experience (practicum). Please indicate the degree to which you disagree or agree with each statement below by *circling only one response* to the right of each statement.

Key

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

U = Uncertain

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

During this last field experience (internship/practicum) for mentoring the teaching of writing, I felt I:

1. was supportive of the mentee for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
2. used writing language from the current English syllabus.	SD	D	U	A	SA
3. guided the mentee with writing lesson preparation.	SD	D	U	A	SA
4. discussed school policies with the mentee for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
5. modelled the teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
6. assisted the mentee with classroom management strategies for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
7. demonstrated how to develop a good rapport with students while teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
8. assisted the mentee with implementing writing teaching strategies.	SD	D	U	A	SA
9. displayed enthusiasm when modelling the teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
10. assisted the mentee to timetable the mentee's writing lessons.	SD	D	U	A	SA
11. outlined writing curriculum/syllabus documents to the mentee.	SD	D	U	A	SA
12. modelled effective classroom management when teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
13. discussed evaluation of the mentee's teaching of writing. ...	SD	D	U	A	SA
14. developed the mentee's strategies for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
15. was effective in modelling the teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
16. provided oral feedback on the mentee's teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
17. was comfortable talking with the mentee about teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
18. discussed with the mentee questioning skills for effective writing teaching.	SD	D	U	A	SA
19. used hands-on materials for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
20. provided written feedback on the mentee's teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
21. discussed with the mentee the knowledge the mentee needed for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA

During this last field experience (internship/practicum) for mentoring the teaching of writing, I felt I:

22. instilled positive attitudes in the mentee for teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
23. assisted the mentee to reflect on improving writing teaching practices.	SD	D	U	A	SA
24. gave the mentee clear guidance for planning to teach writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
25. discussed with the mentee the aims of teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
26. made the mentee feel more confident as a writing teacher.	SD	D	U	A	SA
27. provided problem solving strategies for the mentee's teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
28. reviewed the mentee's writing lesson plans before teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
29. had demonstrated well-designed writing activities for the students.	SD	D	U	A	SA
30. gave the mentee new viewpoints on teaching writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
31. listened to the mentee attentively on teaching writing matters.	SD	D	U	A	SA
32. showed the mentee how to assess the students' learning of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
33. clearly articulated what the mentee needed to do to improve the teaching of writing.	SD	D	U	A	SA
34. observed the mentee teach writing before providing feedback?	SD	D	U	A	SA

Table 1

“Personal Attributes” for mentoring the teaching of primary writing (n=24)

Mentoring Practices	%*	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Comfortable in talking	96	4.42	0.58
Assisted in reflecting	92	4.00	0.42
Instilled positive attitudes	92	4.08	0.50
Listened attentively	88	3.95	0.62
Supportive	88	4.13	0.74
Instilled confidence	79	3.83	0.49

* %=Rank-order percentage of mentors who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” they provided that specific mentoring practice.

Table 2

“System Requirements” for mentoring the teaching of primary writing (n=24)

Mentoring Practices	%*	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Outlined curriculum	71	3.71	0.86
Discussed aims	67	3.79	0.78
Discussed policies	67	3.67	1.05

* %=Rank-order percentage of mentors who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” they provided that specific mentoring practice.

Table 3

“Pedagogical Knowledge” for mentoring the teaching of primary writing (n=24)

Mentoring Practices	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Assisted with teaching strategies	96	4.13	0.45
Discussed content knowledge	96	4.20	0.66
Assisted with classroom management	92	4.25	0.61
Guided preparation	92	4.08	0.65
Discussed implementation	88	4.04	0.69
Assisted in planning	83	3.96	0.69
Discussed assessment	83	4.08	0.65
Assisted with timetabling	79	4.04	0.81
Discussed questioning techniques	79	3.96	0.75
Provided viewpoints	67	3.88	0.74
Discussed problem solving	67	3.75	0.85

* %=Rank-order percentage of mentors who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” they provided that specific mentoring practice.

Table 4

“Modelling” the teaching of primary writing (n=24)

Mentoring Practices	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Modelled classroom management	96	4.54	0.59
Displayed enthusiasm	96	4.33	0.56
Modelled teaching	92	4.42	0.65
Modelled a well-designed lesson	92	4.17	0.70
Modelled rapport with students	88	4.21	0.66
Modelled effective teaching	79	3.96	0.62
Used syllabus language	75	3.83	1.13
Demonstrated hands-on activities	71	3.83	1.05

* %=Rank-order percentage of mentors who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” they provided that specific mentoring practice.

Table 5

Providing “Feedback” on mentoring the teaching of primary writing (n=24)

Mentoring Practices	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Observed teaching for feedback	100	4.46	0.51
Provided oral feedback	96	4.46	0.59
Provided evaluation on teaching	96	4.46	0.59
Reviewed lesson plans	92	4.29	0.75
Articulated expectations	92	4.08	0.50
Provided written feedback	83	3.92	0.88

* %=Rank-order percentage of mentors who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” they provided that specific mentoring practice.