Institute of Education Sciences
REL Northwest at Education Northwest

Laying a Foundation for Successful Mentoring
Training Module 2:
Mentoring Teacher Candidates in the Art and Science of Teaching
Boise State University
October 8, 2020
4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Objectives
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify and apply evidence-based instructional coaching forms and strategies to use with their teacher candidates.
- Understand and analyze evidence-based strategies for providing effective feedback to their teacher candidates at each stage of their practicum.
- Analyze and practice co-teaching as an evidence-based coaching technique to increase their teacher candidates' capacity to deliver effective instruction for all students.

Agenda

Time	Content
4:30 to 4:45 p.m.	Welcome and introductions
4:45 to 5:15 p.m.	Topic 1: Getting started: Mentoring teacher candidates with novice skill sets
5:15 to 5:45 p.m.	Topic 2: Moving along: Teacher candidates with developing skill sets
5:45 to 6:20 p.m.	Topic 3: Really getting somewhere! Teacher candidates with advanced skills
6:20 to 6:30 p.m.	Review and wrap-up

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Evidence-based coaching strategies

Training module 2 highlights the following evidence-based practices for mentoring teacher candidates in the art and science of teaching. See the "References" handout for a full list of research evidence that informed this training module. A space is provided for you to jot down questions about the strategies and make connections to your own work with your teacher candidate.

Coaching strategy	Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice
Co-planning *Helpful for novice, developing, and advanced skill sets* Mentor teachers show how an experienced teacher thinks and moves through the planning process and invites teacher candidates into similar intellectual habits of design. Teacher candidates can see how their mentor plans and try out their own design work with guidance and feedback (Bacharach et al., 2010). Co-planning may take the form of a demonstration for teacher candidates with novice skills or a fully collaborative exercise for teachers with developing and advanced skills. Use of probing questions can help teacher candidates articulate their reasoning and refine their ideas.	
Co-teaching *Most helpful for developing and advanced skill sets* Also referred to as "collaborative teaching" or "teaching together," co-teaching is a flexible format with several ways for two, and in some cases three, teachers to be integrated into lessons. Formats include (Dynak et al., 1997; Schwille, 2008): • **Station teaching** involves different activities led by different teachers at each station. • **Parallel teaching** is a format in which teachers are teaching different content at the same time to two different groups of kids. Then, the teachers switch groups. • **Alternative or differentiated teaching** is similar to parallel teaching in that teaching occurs at the same time, but in this case the content covered is the same but at differing levels of depth or breadth.	

Coaching strategy	Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice
• **Complementary teaching** consists of one teacher leading the content of the lesson and the second teacher providing support to students struggling with the content. Or, the lead teacher may present content, while the second teacher might model for the students a strategy for understanding the material, such as note-taking. • **Team teaching** is a format that can encompass several of the formats described. It is characterized by its fluidity because both teachers move in and out of the lead teacher role.	
Demonstration teaching *Most helpful for novice and developing skill sets* Demonstration teaching includes modeling teaching, but it is extremely intentional for both the mentor and teacher candidate (Schwille, 2008). The teaching is the meat of demonstration teaching, of course, but the preparation and debriefing is the groundwork for cementing learning for teacher candidates. Before a demonstration, a teacher candidate meets with the mentor teacher to discuss the purpose of the demonstration. It is a chance for the mentor to explain their approach, thinking, and decision-making. The mentor can also talk about their expectations for how the lesson might go. During the lesson, the teacher candidate looks for the things discussed during the pre-meeting, takes notes on what they observe, and notates their reflections. This work means teacher candidates bring something to discuss to the post-meeting. They take part in the planning and tweaking of the lesson and can discuss what they learned from the demonstration teaching process.	
Focusing on the students *Most helpful for deveoloping and advanced skill sets* Feedback is focused on students, whether it is their struggles during the lesson, a time they succeeded, or how they are connecting to the material. By focusing on the kids, you not only take some pressure off the teacher candidate, but your feedback is more likely to be	

Coaching strategy	Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice
grounded in evidence because it comes from observations of students (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).	
Pinpointing problems *Most helpful for novice and developing skill sets* Talking about problems that teacher candidates face before those problems escalate is a crucial yet often uncomfortable task (Killian-Wilkins, 2009). Pinpointing problems is a strategy for engaging teacher candidates in identifying, specifying, and analyzing a problem they are facing (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). You may need to engage in pinpointing the problem when teacher candidates make a broad or vague statement of a problem they identify. The steps of the process are: • First, help your teacher candidate think through the major areas the problem spans. • Then, drill down to more specifics, possibly asking your teacher candidate to recall examples. • Last, together, formulate a plan for action.	
Probing questions *Most helpful for novice and developing skill sets* Asking probing questions helps you learn what your teacher candidate means by the things they say, which helps prevent you from assuming you know what your teacher candidate means. It also helps them clarify their ideas and their own assumptions. Start questions with, "Why do you think …" to encourage the teacher candidate to ponder and reflect on why something is occurring.	
Videotape analysis *Helpful for novice, developing, and advanced skill sets* Videotape analysis is a versatile tool for examining exemplar teaching methods and content, pinpointing actions and decision moments, and prompting recall of difficult and successful moments in class. Analyze videos of your own lessons, the teacher candidate's lessons, and exemplars of other teachers teaching specific content or	

Coaching strategy	Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice
concepts. Consider combining microteaching with videotape analysis (Allen & Eve, 1968; Siwatu et al., 2011).	

Evidence-based strategies for providing feedback

Training module 2 highlights the following evidence-based practices for providing feedback to your teacher candidate. See the "References" handout for a full list of research evidence that informed this training module. A space is provided below for you to jot down questions about the strategies and make connections to your own work with your teacher candidate.

Feedback strategies for all teacher candidates

The feedback and strategies used at the beginning of the practicum may be different from those employed toward the end (Lawley et al., 2014). Though topics differentiate among skill sets, some attributes of effective feedback are present in every case:

- Feedback should be objective, meaning it is based on criteria, evidence, or data, not your opinion (Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

- It should be frequent so that the teacher candidate feels supported and directed, and the feedback can build on previous conversations (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

- It should be multimodal, meaning it comes in more than one form. Although verbal conversations are important for building rapport, the details of the conversations may be forgotten. And while written feedback can be referenced later, it does not communicate encouragement or genuine care in the same way face-to-face communication does (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012; Trubowitz, 2004).

- Feedback should be given with a growth mindset, building on the strengths of the teacher candidate and encouraging improvement (Dweck, 2006; He, 2009; Le Cornu, 2009).

- Last, feedback should prompt reflection by asking open-ended questions that invite insights and connections to new learning and ideas (Roberts et al., 2014).

Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice:

Feedback strategies for teacher candidates with novice skill sets

- Feedback for novices should be direct. With few skills to rely on, novice teacher candidates need direct feedback on what to do better, where to look for improvement, and anything they are doing right (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Hoffman et al., 2015; Lawley et al., 2014; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012).

- Teacher candidates need to hear why you made the decisions you did and why you are giving the feedback you are giving (Lawley et al., 2014; Timperly, 2001). The reasons for your choices are not always clear. Let them "see your thinking" (Roberts et al., 2014, p. 177).

- In your feedback, model the reflection you want to see your teacher candidate use (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Roberts et al., 2014).

- Engage jointly with your teacher candidate in identifying both strengths and issue areas. Though it can be uncomfortable, shying away from problem identification will only harm your teacher candidate (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Timperly, 2001).

- In your feedback, asking "why" questions will elicit reflective responses and generate deeper discussion (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Roberts et al., 2014).

Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice:

Effective feedback for teacher candidates with developing skill sets

- Allow teacher candidates to find their own solutions (Roberts et al., 2014; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

- Contain more listening on the side of the mentor, as the teacher candidate begins to articulate the language of teaching (Roberts et al., 2014). This opens the door for teacher candidates to speak freely of their ideas, fears, and obstacles (Smith, 2005).

- Continue to ask "why questions" and discuss them jointly (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Roberts et al., 2014).

- Encourage, make time for, and continue to model reflection (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Roberts et al., 2014). After allowing this time, if the teacher candidate has not concluded with a viable solution or way forward, there is still room for direct feedback (Roberts et al., 2014).

Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice:

Feedback strategies for extending and supporting a teacher candidate with advanced skill sets

- Use mostly reflective questions (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Roberts et al., 2014; Stegman, 2007).
- Continue to challenge teacher candidates to articulate their thinking as to why they do things the way they do (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Roberts et al., 2014).
- Allow the teacher candidate to take the lead in conferencing (Roberts et al., 2014).
- Make space for them to analyze and create their own solutions (Killian & Wilkins, 2009; Stegman, 2007).

Questions, reflections, and connections to my practice:

Demonstration teaching example

"To introduce student teachers to reform-minded mathematics teaching, this mentor invited a group of student teachers to observe a week of mathematics lessons.

"Before each lesson, the mentor and the novices met to discuss the lesson's purpose and content, the course the mentor thought the lesson would take, and her uncertainties about adapting her teaching to pupils' responses.

"During the lesson, the novices positioned themselves around the room, notebooks in hand to record their observations and reflections.

"After the lesson, they met again with the mentor to discuss what had happened, how to approach the next lesson, and what the novices were learning from the demonstrations.

"In this group mentoring experience, the novices had access to the mentor's classroom practice, as well as to her plan and reflection."

Source: Schwille, 2008, p. 148

Pinpointing problems example

Instructions: Read the passage and respond: How does the problem evolve during the conversation?

Sara, a high school Spanish teacher candidate is working on teaching students the preterit tense. She realizes students are having trouble grasping the concept and approaches her mentor, Margo.

Sara: The kids aren't getting the preterit.

Margo: What do you think is going on?

Sara: Maybe students are not paying attention. Or maybe my explanation is not clear enough.

Margo: Your explanation isn't clear enough? What do you mean by that?

Sara: The way I present the preterit might not be effective because I concentrate on suffixes.

Margo: Ok, what else?

Sara: I mean, it's like they're learning verb forms in isolation. They're not connected to anything relevant and it's boring.

Margo: I wonder if they are losing focus because they don't understand when and why to use the preterit.

Sara: I know. It feels so disconnected.

Margo: What can we do about that?

Sara: Well, I'd like to try something with compare and contrast using the two past tense forms.

Margo: Interesting idea. Why is that?

Sara: People learn well by compare and contrast —you know, hot and cold, up and down. And I think I could break it down simply — when to use the preterit, when to use the imperfect. Once they know which tense to use, we can hammer the suffixes. But the textbook doesn't introduce the imperfect for another few chapters, so I don't know if I can.

Margo: I agree with you. Let's take a look at the content standards and our syllabus. The imperfect isn't due to come up for three weeks. How about this: tonight, sketch out a lesson plan and the materials you'd like to show your students. Let's meet about it tomorrow at lunch so you can walk me through how you will help the students understand.

Side-by-side co-teaching example

Instructions: Read the passage. Then discuss the following questions with your group members. Be ready to share a few key ideas from your conversation.

- Which co-teaching format was used? How do you know?
- What are some steps you would take to co-plan a lesson like this with your teacher candidate?

A mentor teacher and teacher candidate planned a lesson in which students could apply their knowledge of how to find the area of a given space in a room in their home. For all students to have the opportunity to present a scaled drawing of a room in their home, each teacher facilitated one of two groups.

Each teacher reviewed the steps necessary to compute the area of a given space with their group. Using the measurements and drawing of a room in their home, each student in the group was called upon to lead their peers through the steps to find the area of their room. Each teacher monitored the individual students as they led the discussion and problem-solving activity.

Teaching together example

Instructions: Read the passage below. Note the co-teaching formats and strategies the teachers used. Below the passage, note one or two skills your teacher candidate will need to develop before you could deliver a co-teaching lesson like the one in the example. Jot down an idea for what you might do to adapt this type of co-teaching in an online context.

In their literature class, the students were in the midst of a unit which included reading excerpts from the biographies of Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The students read the passages so that they could discuss how the sections of the biographies related to the time period and historical events that were taking place. Working collaboratively, both teachers designed a lesson where one assumed the role of Abigail Adams and the other the role of Thomas Jefferson. They began the lesson by each giving a summary of their biography and the beliefs that they had about the events of their time period. Then, the students were asked to develop questions for the characters.

During the question/answer period, the teachers moved in and out of character as they answered the students' questions and attempted to provoke debate about the controversial issues of the time period in which Abigail Adams and Thomas Jefferson lived. As the lesson proceeded, they took turns eliciting questions, answering questions, and probing students for their thinking about the issues that arose. At a given point in the lesson, one teacher took the lead in answering a question, while the other teacher probed the students to extend their thinking about the answer. As an example, when the teacher portraying Abigail Adams was asked to give her views about women's rights, she answered that she felt women did not belong in Congress. The second teacher asked the students why they thought Abigail Adams answered the question in this way. The students began to discuss women's rights in historical context, shifting back and forth from present to past, while the teachers moved in and out of role to expand and clarify the points being made. Throughout the lesson, they shared the teaching responsibilities.

Source: Dynak et al., 1997, p. 71–72

What skills does your teacher candidate need before delivering a co-teaching lesson like this one?	How would you adapt these types of co-teaching strategies for an online lesson?

Planning co-teaching experiences

Instructions: Make a copy of this document. Fill in the boxes on the right to think through a co-teaching lesson you would like to try with your teacher candidate.

Questions to consider	Planning notes
What lesson or content might work well with co-teaching?	
Which co-teaching format(s) would work best for you and your teacher candidate to teach this lesson or content? Highlight all that apply.	Station teaching Parallel teaching Alternative (differentiated) teaching Complementary teaching Team teaching
What responsibilities would you have? Your teacher candidate?	My responsibilities: Teacher candidate responsibilities:
How would you prepare your teacher candidate for co-teaching this lesson or content?	
What skills does your teacher candidate need to co-teach this lesson or content?	