

HELPFUL MENTORING PRACTICES

- ❑ Write a personal letter of welcome. Your handwritten note might be a message cherished for a lifetime.
- ❑ Invite the beginning teacher to ask questions. For instance, you might directly ask any of the following questions: “What concerns do you have? What would you like to discuss? How can I help you the most? What causes you to feel anxious or uncertain?” Encourage the beginning teacher to ask both procedural and theoretical questions.
- ❑ Consider keeping a dialogue journal. The mentor teacher might begin the journaling experience with a welcoming note and then an invitation to ask question. Then the beginning teacher could response using the same notebook/ journal.
- ❑ Establish a constant meeting place and time. Encourage the beginning teacher to jot down questions/ topics for collegial meeting time.
- ❑ Model being a continual learner. Talk about what you are reading, writing, and learning from students.
- ❑ Videotape your own teaching and ask the beginning teacher to watch it with you. Be self-critical and invite the beginning teacher to offer ideas and suggestions. For instance, you might say, “The students didn’t seem involved in the discussion as usual. What do you think was happening?”
- ❑ Co-plan a unit (if you are teaching the same subject and the same grade level). Interdisciplinary units would also be a way to demonstrate the joy of collaboration. To make the situation more equal, you might wish to work with a unit that is new to both of you.
- ❑ Co-teach a unit. Perhaps you could combine two classes and co-teach a unit. If that is not possible, perhaps you could co-plan a unit and then you could each one part and switch classes.
- ❑ Be candid in admitting your failures. Admit, “Today just didn’t go as well as I had expected.” Tell about your experience and ask the beginning teacher for her response. It is important for the beginning teacher to see that experienced teachers also have bad days, and it will encourage the beginning teacher to share problems.
- ❑ Be an action researcher. Decide what questions you would like to pose regarding student learning and how you will collect information. For instance, perhaps you want to determine the differences between male and female read habits. Share your learning experience with the beginning teacher or conduct the action research together.
- ❑ Discuss professional opportunities. Help the beginning teacher become a member of professional organizations, attend professional conference, or work toward an advanced degree. Discuss professional issues.