The 3 C’s of Mentor-Mentee Interactions:
Content, Context, and Communication

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New Teachers Struggle

- Face a steep learning curve
- Experience feelings of anxiety, stress, feeling of being overwhelmed (Feiman-Nemser, 2003)
- Are often unsupported (Moore Johnson, 2005)
- Those not receiving comprehensive induction support twice as likely to leave (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004)
- Unsupported teachers may not learn to use effective practices
Mentoring: Piece of the puzzle

- Supported teachers find their job more manageable;
- experience greater success in getting through to the most challenging student; and
- job more satisfying and more likely to remain and succeed in the classroom.
NCIPP
National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development

- Literature Syntheses & Policy Analysis
- Identify Promising Practices/Induction Programs
- Models of Quality Induction and Mentoring Practice

Technical Assistance/Dissemination
NCIPP Site Studies

- Cincinnati Public Schools
  - I&M program-Emphasis on structured teacher evaluation
  - Up to one year program

- Special School District
  - I&M program-Emphasis on special educator development
  - Five-year program

- Olathe Public Schools
  - I&M program- Emphasis on teacher development, focus on special educator needs
  - Three-year program
So, what is mentoring?

- **Career Supports**
  - In special education: Help with setting up the classroom, writing IEPs, behavior management, instructional strategies, working with paraeducators, etc.
- **Psycho-social Supports**
  - In special education: Understanding about the difficulties of being a 1st year teacher, working through job anxieties, etc.
- Are these two parallel systems as Kram suggests? OR are they more interconnected?
Study Design

- **Participants:**
  - 16 new special educators
  - 5 Mentor teachers

- **Setting**
  - Large urban school district

- **Data sources**
  - New teacher interviews
  - Year long mentor evaluation records and communication logs
Findings: Content, Context, and Communication

- **Content**: What was the content of mentoring between the new teachers and mentors?
  - Was this content different for district assigned mentors and school-based mentors?

- **Context**: How was career vs. psycho-social support related to school context?

- **Communication**: How and about what did the new teachers and their mentors communicate?
## Mentoring Support Structures

### District Assigned Mentor
- Mentoring tied to evaluation
- At least 2 informal and 2 formal observations
- Feedback tied both to evaluation and general needs

### Informal/formal school-based mentor
- Variability of mentor selection
  - Team leaders as mentors
  - Informal mentoring relationships
  - Principal-assigned mentor
- Variability of meeting times, feedback, and support
District-Assigned Mentor Support

- Classroom management
- Assessment
- Personal goal setting
- Student motivation
- Student specific support
- District specific support
- Support and coaching to “pass” evaluations
School-based mentor support

- Structuring classroom at the beginning of the year
- Informal and frequent meetings
- Collaborative problem solving
- Procedural knowledge
- IEPs
- School teams
- Content knowledge
- Managing work responsibilities
- Emotional support
New Teacher Concerns about District-Assigned Mentors

- Nervous about evaluation
- Confusing expectations
Context

- Large urban school district
- New teachers reported issues such as:
  - Addressing AYP in “failing” school
  - Context-specific student behavior concerns
District-Assigned Mentor Evaluation Data

Each district-assigned mentor must provide

- Log of time with new teacher
- Transcript of all observations
- Written feedback to new teacher

Areas coded in evaluation data:

- Instructional Supports
- Observation Feedback
- Evaluation feedback
Instructional Support Areas

- Student Behavior**
- Assessment
- IEPs
- Instructional strategies**
- Co-teaching
- Working with paraeducators
- Materials and resources
- District procedures
- Induction-specific procedures**
- Accommodations and modifications
- Working with parents
Observation feedback areas

- Praise for new teacher
- Rapport with students
- Higher order thinking
- Behavioral strategies
- Instructional planning
- Instructional strategies**
- Materials and resources
- Induction-specific procedures
- Working with paraeducators
Evaluation Feedback

- Evaluation is tied to the Danielson framework: A comprehensive view of teachers’ primary roles
  - Domain 1: Planning and preparation**
  - Domain 2: Effective classroom and behavior management
  - Domain 3: Instruction**
  - Domain 4: Professional behavior
Returning to Kram.....

- So, in this large school district, how do career and psycho-social supports relate?
  - Little focus on psycho-social supports
  - Teachers provided directed, specific career-related supports

- Psycho-social supports are EMBEDDED within the career supports

- When a new teacher is provided with robust career supports, does the need for psychological support diminish?
Current Hypothesis:

- When new teachers’ instructional needs are met, there is less need for psychological support.
- The mentor teachers look at the situation from the macro level and provide needed career support to address the issue.
- Spanish Armada of Support (Mary Brownell, 2010)
Questions