Using Technology to Prepare and Mentor Beginning Special Education Teachers

Sean J. Smith, University of Kansas

Maya Israel, University of Kansas

Alyson Mike, New Teacher Center

Context for this Presentation

National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development (NCIPP)

- Writing Teams on the following topics:
  - Induction
  - Collaboration
  - Teacher Education/Partnerships
  - Policy

http://education.ufl.edu/grants/ncipp

Induction Paper - Writing Team

- Bonnie Billingsley - Virginia Tech
- Cynthia Griffin - University of Florida
- Sean J. Smith - University of Kansas
- Maya Israel - University of Kansas and soon the University of Cincinnati

- White Paper will soon be available at:
  http://education.ufl.edu/grants/ncipp
- Article on the e-mentoring work will be available in an upcoming issue of:
  Journal of Special Education Leadership

What we Know...Just the Facts

- Literature Review
    - Technology
    - Mentor/Mentee Relationship
    - Training
    - Hybrid Approach

Process

- Web search for existing programs
  - Literature review
  - Conference proceedings

- Semi-structured question protocol inquiring about
  - Online platform and components
  - Mentor/Mentee match
  - Facilitator role(s)
  - Professional development
  - Online content
  - Financial sustainability

10 Programs Identified

- INTC-Online

- eMSS

- WINGS

- Project TIN

- ENDAPT

- UWEB

- VIP—Emporia

- TLINC Denver

- BRIDGE

- Project PACT

Three Common Issues

- Technical considerations

- Mentor/Mentee considerations

- Financial sustainability considerations

Technical considerations

- Software operating systems

- Synchronous vs. asynchronous communication

- Online resources/curricula

- Role of a facilitator

Technical Considerations

Software Operating Systems

- **Course Management Systems**
  - BlackBoard/WebCT
  - Internally created

- **Communities of Practice**
  - Tapped In

Technical Considerations

Synchronous vs. asynchronous communication

- Synchronous
  - Text based: Chat rooms
  - VoIP: Skype
  - Video conferencing

- Asynchronous
  - Discussion boards
  - Email

Technical Considerations

Online resources/curricula

- Collaborative resources
  - Archived discussion sessions

- Curriculum modules
  - Mentor and mentee information

- Web links
  - Mentor and mentee information

Mentor/Mentee Considerations

■ **Mentor/Mentee match**

- One-to-one vs. group
- Criteria for matching mentors and mentees

Mentor/Mentee Considerations

- **Mentor professional development**

    - Single time vs. ongoing
    - Face-to-face vs. online
    - Prescribed curricula vs. "as needed"

Facilitator Considerations

- Professional development

- Role within the website
  - Technical support
  - Program support

Financial Sustainability

- What to do when initial funding ends?

  - Alternate funding sources
    - Foundations, State Dept. of Education, school districts, IHEs, fee for services

  - Program reduction

Lessons Learned

- Most programs used asynchronous discussion forums.
  - BUT, programs are beginning to explore additional communication sources such as VoIP and video conferencing.

- Different models of are effective IF the structure is in place to provide immediate feedback and support to the notive teachers.

Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Role of facilitators is crucial for the success of e-mentoring programs

- Mentoring in an online environment is different than mentoring in a face-to-face environment.
  - It is important to provide the e-mentors with the structures for supporting novice teachers online.

Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Financial support must constantly be addressed to promote program sustainability.

Mentoring to Support and Retain Science & Math Teachers

Alyson Mike, eMSS Associate Director

Council of Exceptional Children
April 3, 2009

New Teacher Center
at the University of California, Santa Cruz

MISSION

To improve student learning by supporting the development of
an inspired, dedicated, and highly-qualified teaching force.

e-Mentoring for Student Success History

- 2002 received a 5 year grant from the National Science Foundation to support new 6-12 grade science and math teachers.
- Three Partners
  - National Science Teachers Association (professional organization for science teachers)
  - New Teacher Center @ UC Santa Cruz
  - Montana State University (distance learning experts)
- 2008-09 Clients including states, districts, universities and non- profits pay a subsidized fee for each mentee.
- 2009-10 Clients pay a fee for each mentee

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The Results

Independent research has shown that eMSS has had a significant impact on:

- Preparedness to teach challenging courses and curricula.

- Ability to teach content.

- Preparedness in basic teaching and classroom management skills.

- Teacher satisfaction.

eMSS –
A Significant Impact on the Nation's Education Community

Since 2002, eMSS has:

- Worked in all 50 states.
- Trained more than 500 online content focused mentors.
- Mentored more than 1,500 new teachers.
- Influenced the education of more than a quarter of a million students.

Instructional Mentoring
A Component of Induction

In online mentoring, the focus is on advancing the beginning teacher's classroom practice through **dialogue** around

- Pedagogical content knowledge
- Disciplinary content knowledge
- Content standards
- Assessment
- The beginning teacher's developmental needs and instructional context.
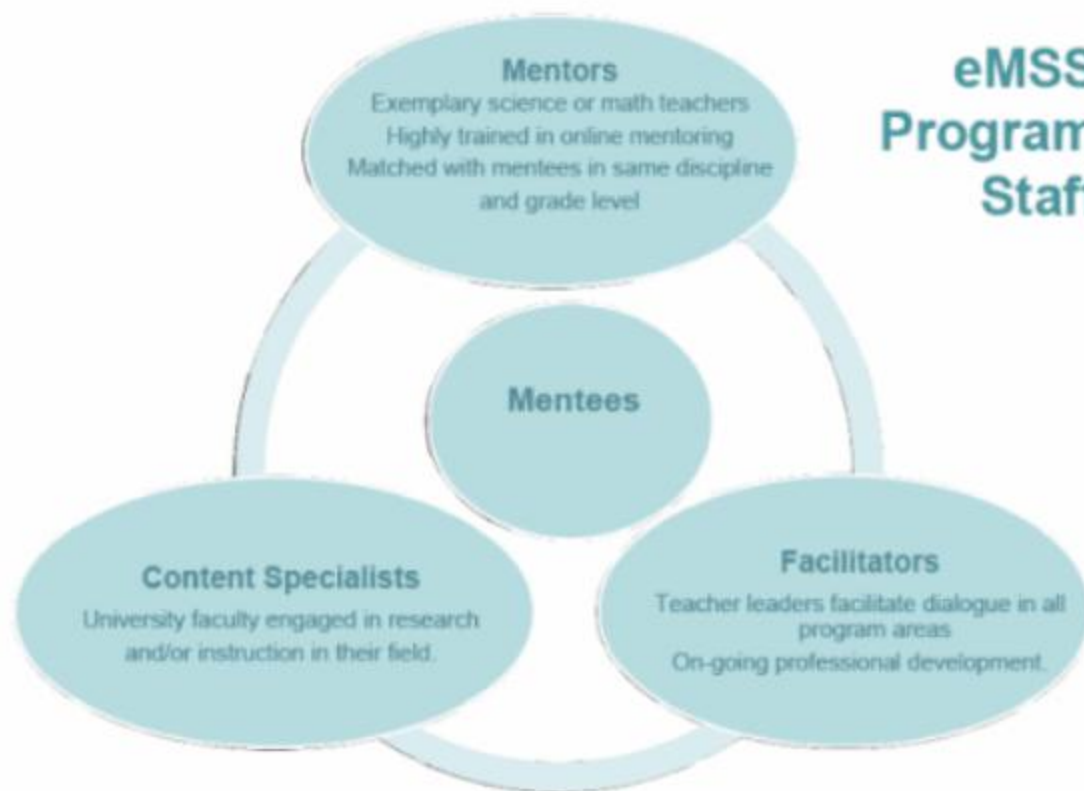
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eMSS New Teachers (Mentees)

Mentees

- Are 1st , 2nd, or 3rd year secondary science or math teachers recruited by clients.
- Hold **any** type of certification - including interns
- Are matched with an experienced science or math teacher as a personal mentor.

eMSS Program Staff

Mentors
Exemplary science or math teachers
Highly trained in online mentoring
Matched with mentees in same discipline
and grade level

Mentees

Content Specialists
University faculty engaged in research
and/or instruction in their field.

Facilitators
Teacher leaders facilitate dialogue in all
program areas
On-going professional development.

eMSS Design

Organizations enroll their beginning teachers in eMSS
- State Departments of Education
- School Districts
- Universities
- Non- Profits

eMSS Design

Our Place

Our Place

A private area designed for mentees to work with their mentors. Mentees discuss their teaching practice and receive 1-on-1 mentoring from an experienced teacher in the same grade and subject.

eMSS Design

Mentee Place and Mentor Place

Mentee Place and Mentor Place
Discussion forums for larger groups of mentees and mentors.
• *Mentee Place* allows mentees to share ideas and connect with other beginning teachers across the country.
• *Mentor Place* offers ongoing professional development and support for mentors.

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eMSS Design

Inquiries

Self-selected small groups examine pedagogical and/or content practices that are applied directly to the classroom.

A foundational part of eMSS, this is a structured and facilitated curriculum, which guides participants through a plan, prepare, and reflect cycle.

eMSS Design

Community Forums and Resources

A community of middle and high school teachers participates in discussion forums facilitated by teacher leaders and practicing scientists and mathematicians.

Content-focused discussions, dilemmas of practice, and access to resources are the heart of this area.

Key Learnings

- Mentoring is a key factor in developing professional high quality educators.

- Beginning teachers need a support system to utilize resources and adapt them to their context.

- Program must be engaging, while addressing the time constraints of the beginning teacher.

- Mentoring mirrors high quality teaching.

- Personal relationship are critical.

Next Steps for eMSS

- Actively seeking funding to pilot and develop eMSS-Special Education.

- Organize mentoring support based on broad categories of disabilities.

- Focus support in urban, rural, and hard to staff positions.

- Develop an online curriculum addressing the unique needs of special education teachers.

For More Information:

http://newteachercenter.org/eMSS/menu.php?p=home

Alyson Mike   ammike@ucsc.edu   406.227.5242