

EDL 540 Module 4: Critical Thinking

Mary Beth Cheversia

Colorado State University Global

EDL 540: Human Resource Leadership

Anthony Pellegrini

September 8, 2024

EDL 540 Module 4: Critical Thinking

Student success is largely dependent on students receiving a high-quality education. In a profession where teacher turnover is significant, having a program in place to educate new teachers is essential to the longer-term retention of those teachers and student success. Having a mentoring program in place for new teachers is just one important aspect to setting both teachers and students for success (Berlin, 2010).

Goal of Mentoring Program

A new teacher mentoring program at Fort Collins High School (FCHS) will serve to introduce new educators to the building and profession, providing professional development around the skills needed to be an effective educator. One of the main goals of the program will be to ground new educators in the culture of the school and district. Additionally, the program will ensure that new educators have access to supports and resources to be successful. The new teacher program at FCHS will pair new educators with a veteran mentor teacher through a process described in this paper.

Structure

The new teacher mentorship program at FCHS will consist of a PLC of new educators who will meet monthly for professional development paired with a teacher mentorship experience within the building. In addition to the monthly PLC meeting, to cover broader topics, teachers and mentors will meet at least biweekly, more frequently is encouraged, to debrief key learnings, allow space to questions and planning. The topics for monthly professional development meetings are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Proposed Structure for Professional Development Opportunities for New Teachers

August	Building School Climate and Culture • Mentor Pairs and Peer Pairs • Introduce counselors, Integrated Services Case Managers, ELD staff, school support staff, family liaisons • Essentials: Building Tour, Classroom Set-Up, Gradebook, Substitute System • Safety and Security procedure for drills
September	Classroom Management • Building a positive and welcoming classroom culture and relationships • Deans at FCHS • MTSS Tiers of Intervention
October	Instructional Practices • Designing Learning Targets and Success Criteria and Formative Assessments • Setting Lesson Purpose and Summative Assessments • Data Analysis
November	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion • How to make lessons more inclusive for all students • Incorporating cultural and historical events into lessons • Intervention training for student interactions
December	Integrated Services • Accessing a student's IEP or 504 • Implementing accommodations • Referring a student to Integrated Services • Immediate interventions and behavior management techniques
January	English Language Development • Accessing a student's ELD plan • WIDA levels and reading an ELD snapshot • Understand trauma in newcomer students • Making content accessible for multilingual learners: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking • ACCESS testing
February	Personal Mental Health and Wellness • Stress Management for Teachers • Check in on mental health and wellness • Include outside resources for educators
March	Educator Evaluation

	● Overview of the 5D+ rubric ● Evaluation Timelines ● SLO process
April	State Assessments ● Roles and Responsibilities ● Data analysis of previous CO-PSAT data-why is the test important?
May	End of the Year ● Reflection on the year and looking forward ● End of the Year procedures

Mentor Matching and Training

According to Berlin (2010), “The mentors’ effectiveness ultimately determines to what extent programs will support new teachers in helping kids succeed. Successful mentors have many important aptitudes, but above all they are exceptional educators with a track record of fostering significant student learning gains in diverse settings (Berlin, 2010, para. 4). In the case of the mentoring program at FCHS, mentors will be chosen through a mixture of recommendation based on exemplary experience and interest application by those who have a desire to mentor. In some cases, there may be more than one mentor option available for a new educator, and the ultimate decision will be made through a brief matching process. In this process, the available mentees and mentors will have the opportunity to observe short lessons and conduct short informal-type interview sessions so that the best possible match can be made.

Aside from expertise in the classroom and years of experience, it is important to train new mentors in advising new educators. It is encouraged that the mentors attend as many New Teacher Academy professional development meetings with their mentee as possible, so that there is common ground for discussion. In addition, mentors should be trained prior to the beginning of the school year, in techniques for conducting effective classroom observations and providing constructive and positive feedback.

Program Evaluation and Reflection

The mentorship program will be evaluated through the collection of formative data from mentors and mentees alike, in conjunction with official new teacher evaluation data. Mentors will be able to provide data from quarterly observations of the mentee as well as anecdotal data on the progress of the mentee. Likewise, the mentee will be able to provide feedback to administrators on the effectiveness of their mentor. It is important that an administrator also meets periodically with the mentor and mentee pair to assure a positive working relationship and progression toward the ultimate goal of the program, acclimation of the new educator to the school and profession.

The creation of this mentorship program helped me to reflect on my experiences as a new leader in the New Teacher Academy at FCHS, previous teacher mentor, a mentee within FCHS, current mentor of a new educator, and my experiences in my own first years of teaching. I built upon the pre-existing structure the New Teacher Academy at FCHS but added additional professional development elements. I incorporated the elements of the mentorship program that I experienced as a new educator that were most beneficial to me: the matching process and continual opportunities for communication. In my experience, a productive mentoring experience for a new teacher can be instrumental in fostering a long-standing career in education, with student success at the forefront.

References

Berlin, D. (2010, March 25). *Better mentoring, better teachers (opinion)*. Education Week.

Retrieved September 8, 2024, from

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-better-mentoring-better-teachers/2010/03>