



Mentoring: The Road to Change

IDE Corp. (Innovative Designs for Education) has been in the business of bringing about change in schools for over a decade. Our experience has shown that the best way to bring about substantive change is through a mentoring model: one-shot workshops simply do not cut it! Teachers should receive workshops in the overarching concepts and skills related to an initiative; but the “real work” comes through the productive, meaningful relationship between the teacher and the mentor. Along those lines, the following tips guide the mentoring process:

- The mentor should be someone with a background in education who has firsthand experience in the program being implemented. He or she should also be someone to whom the teacher can relate.
- The mentor should visit the teacher’s class prior to any training or mentoring to gain a better understanding of the teacher’s style, classroom setup, curriculum, students, and challenges.
- The mentor and teacher should meet after the training session(s) to identify specific goals and expectations for their work together.
- The mentor should set up the schedule ahead of time with the teacher, and the mentoring period should include a specific agreed-upon focus.
- A mentor should work with each teacher on site a minimum of once a month for a thirty to sixty minute block of time.
- On-site mentoring visits should include a combination of in-class active mentoring and out-of-class collaboration and planning.
- The on-site mentoring visit should end with a set of specific goals for the coming week or month (depending on the number of mentoring visits per month).
- Between mentoring visits, the mentor and teacher should maintain email contact regarding implementation of the initiative (successes, challenges, review of materials, etc.).
- Between mentoring visits, the mentor should email teachers with highlights from other teachers in the initiative, ideas, resources, tips, etc.
- The mentor should maintain contact with the grant initiative “gatekeeper” to keep him/her apprised of the progress of the initiative and offer suggestions for how the district can support the initiative further.