

# **A Mentoring Model for Scaffolding Teacher Candidates into Independence**

\*Developed by and for PDS mentors

## **How to Use:**

The following guidelines outline considerations for each of the five phases of a typical internship experience. Each phase, with the exception of the pre-internship phase, provides guidelines for five domains of mentoring: (1) purposeful observation and reflection; (2) planning and instruction; (3) classroom management; (4) other professional activities; and, (5) some things of which to be aware or cautious. Note that this document is not intended to be exhaustive, but should provide you with the basic information needed to become a successful mentor of a teacher candidate in a PDS school. On the last two pages, you will find a succinct checklist that can be printed back-to-back to help you keep track of these considerations as you move through the phases.

## **Abbreviations:**

TC – teacher candidate

CT – Collaborate Team

RC – Responsive Classroom

## **Pre-Internship Phase**

### **Before You Get Started**

As a school, use purposeful matching opportunities to pair teacher candidates with mentors.

Start building relationships with your teacher candidate early by:

- inviting them to lunch.

- having them help set up the classroom.

Encourage participation in back-to-school events (e.g., Open House, Back to School Night, Curriculum Night).

Think aloud, question, and model and invite reflection from the beginning.

## Phase 1: Understanding and Engaging in the Classroom and School Community

### Purposeful Observation and Reflection

Design structured observations (e.g., during independent reading, TC observes students using a reading engagement survey or their own anecdotal notes).

Focus language observations on specific types of language choices (e.g., noticing language). Lead conversations about when and why of language choices.

Recognize that the TC will feel a bit paralyzed by the RC language expectations at first. Consider creating an RC “cheat sheet” of phrases they can wear on the back side of their badge.

Explicitly highlight how a positive rapport and relationship is established with families and students.

Try a glow/grow/goal reflection structure – this will balance a TC’s tendencies to feel that everything is a struggle at the beginning.

### Planning and Instruction

Share read alouds with the TC (e.g., alternating pages, alternating characters).

Ask the TC to call on students to answer or share during lessons.

Encourage the TC to create anchor charts (e.g., teacher can call on students and TC can write on the chart).

Have the TC sit next to you at the easel or during morning meeting, even if you are leading most/all of the instruction.

Ask the TC to lead a component of morning meeting, perhaps starting with sharing or the message. Alternate message writing (mentor teacher writes one week, TC does the following and continue every other week).

Include the TC in opening activities in CT meetings; encourage them to spend time learning the acronyms and lingo.

### Classroom Management

Prompt the TC to verbally acknowledge student behaviors during transitions (e.g. “Ms. C, what are you noticing?”).

Ask the TC to lead transitions (e.g., lining students up).

Task the TC with leading an energizer or exercises.

Have the TC model during interactive modeling (e.g., “What do you notice about Ms. C?”)

Ask the TC to take on a component of closing circle.

### Other Professional Activities

Prompt the TC to explicitly identify how to prepare for the day both before, and after, school (e.g., changing schedule, updating learning objectives, lunch tables, changing jobs, forms, breakfast supplies, etc.).

Get the TC involved in the prep work. Have them consider what needs to be ready for today, this week, or even this month.

Engage the TC in classroom set-up, attending Back to School Night, and family conferences.

### Be Aware/Cautious of...

While eagerness in a TC is a good thing, taking on too much too fast can lead to a lack of understanding of the “why” behind instructional and management decisions.

Because of the initial structure of time and responsibilities with internship, it is likely and expected that the TC will get to know students and develop closer relationships with students than the mentor.

Have the friendly vs. friend conversation early; be explicit about the ways in which you are friendly, but not friends.

Take a proactive role in establishing your TC as a teacher in the classroom.

Establish your mentor “role” with the TC by considering what kind of mentor they need. Determine your relationship boundaries.

## Phase 2: Purposeful Opportunities for Planning, Management, and Instruction

### Purposeful Observation and Reflection

Reflect aloud on why each part of a routine or a lesson is important. Don't make assumptions that they know what to do or that they know why you are doing what you are doing.

Encourage the idea that making mistakes is part of the learning process; highlight your own mistakes and failures and how you learn from them.

Encourage the TC to carefully script their lessons.

Use videos to make connections and encourage teacher language/RC growth.

Move towards systematic reflection as a TC increases their responsibilities; establish time and structure for shared reflection.

### Planning and Instruction

Encourage TC to lead a book group, word study group, or center/ station.

Have TC lead conferring efforts (e.g., listening to students read and taking anecdotal notes).

Begin scaffolding TC into guided reading by thinking aloud during planning for guided reading, then having them observe and reflect on a lesson following your instruction. Prompt them to notice what you are doing to manage student learning.

Alternate observations and teaching opportunities (e.g., observe math on Monday, teach math on Tuesday, observe math on Wednesday, etc.). Engage in reflective conversations and think alouds related to planning and instruction.

Increase morning meeting responsibilities (e.g., have them lead multiple components daily or lead all components on alternating days).

Give TC an opportunity to experience teaching an entire morning meeting or Literacy block. Reflect on putting the pieces together: planning, instruction, assessment, reflection.

### Classroom Management

Explicitly scaffold, highlight, encourage, and reflect upon the role of reinforcing language.

Encourage recognition of importance of matching body language, tone, and words.

Assist the TC with connecting between the words they are saying and what kids are doing.

Review/reflect on why the language that you use matters.

Ask TC to rearrange seats with their knowledge of students.

Encourage TC to lead all transitions within the building and/or classroom.

Explicitly model how to handle challenging conversations that address difficult or repeated misbehaviors.

Prompt TC to use reinforcing language (e.g. "Ms. C, what do you notice...?").

### Other Professional Activities

Invite participation in CT meetings through inclusive prompts and questions or note taking.

Facilitate participation in school events, activities, and clubs.

### Be Aware/Cautious of...

Develop consistency between what a TC wants students to do and then having students meet those expectations.

Raise awareness of and encourage differentiation in the moment through "reading" the class together (e.g., need for energizer, time on the carpet, etc.).

## Phase 3: Owning and Embracing Increased Leadership of Planning, Management, and Instruction\*

Purposeful Observation and Reflection	Planning and Instruction	Classroom Management	Other Professional Activities	Be Aware/Cautious of...
<p>Consider using a "two weeks on, one week off" cycle to encourage purposeful observation as TC responsibilities increase and they build toward independence (or "two days on, one day off" in shorter internship experiences).</p> <p>Focus on redirecting TC's language and building their confidence, comfort, and effectiveness in management.</p> <p>Make the reflection and feedback more purposeful and change the structure if needed due to the increased responsibilities the TC is taking on (e.g., consider a notebook chart or T-chart of positives and things for TC to work on; watch and reflect on videos together).</p>	<p>Ask TC to plan and lead instruction in a content area, adding on a content area every two weeks.</p> <p>Reflect collaboratively after lessons to increase "in lesson awareness;" encourage TC to adapt in the moment as they learn to read the students during instruction (e.g., putting in turn and talks – when / why).</p> <p>Help TC move from replicating skills / processes to taking ownership of these and considering the rationale behind each instructional decision.</p> <p>Ask TC to revisit objectives with an eye toward connecting these to intentional, formative assessment opportunities.</p> <p>Encourage TC to look at specific indicators of student learning (e.g., "How do you know students were engaged? How are you... formatively assessing? piecing together the big picture?").</p> <p>Highlight chances for TC to make explicit for students the connections between instruction from one day to the next.</p> <p>Find a balance between co-teaching and interjecting or sitting back. Share with your TC that you are transitioning – interjecting one day, then sitting back the next.</p>	<p>Encourage TC to make the transition into the role of the teacher; this is when they realize that friend and friendly are different.</p> <p>Prompt the TC to use redirecting language when appropriate.</p> <p>Support the TC as they intersect management with increased planning and instruction.</p> <p>Prompt TC to use the timer to maintain pacing.</p> <p>Remind the TC to not make assumptions that students know what to do – reminding language and modeling still matter.</p> <p>As you step back, be aware of students playing you and the TC off of each other.</p> <p>As with instruction, find a balance between interjecting and sitting back as the TC navigates managing the classroom.</p>	<p>Encourage the TC to take ownership of preparation for the day.</p> <p>Facilitate TC's regular contribution to CT meetings.</p> <p>Take on a more supportive role in CT meetings (e.g., maintaining notes).</p> <p>Guide conversations about the job search broadly and provide feedback on resume, cover letter writing, and interview preparation.</p>	<p>TC regression following a break.</p> <p>Be cognizant of maintaining a focus on reflection even as responsibilities increase.</p> <p>Address minor concerns that arise as a result of picking up more responsibilities now so that these don't become big issues later.</p> <p>As the TC picks up more content responsibilities, they tend to want to stick to the plan. Reflect with them to notice opportunities to adapt in the moment.</p> <p>*Note that this is the most difficult phase – you should be figuring out what kind of mentoring your TC needs at this point.</p>



## Phase 4: Independent Phase

### Purposeful Observation and Reflection

Use video more when you aren't in the room. Reflect on these videos together.

### Planning and Instruction

Maintain a guided reading group and a guided math group; participate in stations and morning meeting. Find chunks of time to step in and step out.

Think carefully about your individual context to define what TC "independence" looks like. What is your role in terms of support for planning? How do we maximize co-teaching? How do you balance the support you provide – do you design a time to leave? What is too much versus too little support?

### Classroom Management

Think carefully about your individual context to define what TC "independence" looks like. What is your role in terms of support for classroom management? How do you balance the support you provide – do you design a time to leave? What is too much versus too little support?

### Other Professional Activities

Invite administrators in to observe TC.

### Be Aware/ Cautious of...

Know yourself. If you have a hard time not jumping in, then maybe leave the classroom more often. If this is not an issue, maybe remain in the classroom. If kids tend to come to you, maybe leave; if not, maybe stay.

You want to ask what they want, but you also have a level of responsibility to guide what they need.

## Phase 5: Internship Closure

### Purposeful Observation and Reflection

Facilitate observations of independent teaching within the grade, across grade levels, and in various resource/specialized settings.

Engage in a holistic reflective conversation about glows, grows, and goals following internship.

### Planning and Instruction

Return collaboration/co-teaching to teacher.

### Classroom Management

Return classroom management to teacher.

Transition students and parents to imminent departure of the TC from the classroom, if applicable.

### Other Professional Activities

Offer to write a letter of recommendation for a TC, if appropriate.

Complete professional responsibilities to the university and/or school district to facilitate TC's paperwork completion and potential payment for serving as a mentor.

### Be Aware/ Cautious of...

The transition from TC to new teacher can feel overwhelming. Offer a listening ear in the year to come as they make this transition.