

“There Is No Guru”

Mentoring maps for intentional agriculture teacher growth

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Introduction & Need for Idea

Mentoring has traditionally been used to support beginning teachers in a one-on-one way (Greiman, 2010).

A mentor was a role model and expert (Podsén & Denmark, 2007)

Our state has a 100% volunteer mentoring program and veteran teachers willing to help, but do not feel they have the answers

While thinking about these challenges, we ran across the work of Rockquomore (2010; 2011; 2016) who was speaking to the same problems in the mentoring of higher education faculty.

Concrete issues with traditional mentoring include: varying definitions of mentoring (2010), large time commitments for what is largely “time intensive, invisible, and unrewarded labor” (Rockquomore, 2016, para. 7) and the fact no one is an expert in all areas which may require mentoring (2010).

Advocates shifting from a person-based to a needs-based approach

Mentees are responsible for figuring out what they need and asking someone who already knows how to get it or knows the answer

“There is no guru”, but rather a network of people who can help get those needs met

Leads to shortened time commitments for the information holders

Creates a model where the young teacher would be in-charge of their own success (Rockquomore, 2016).

Resources Needed

No direct costs for current program.

Management donated by past-president of OATA and myself

Highest work demands are late summer arranging mentor pairs

We use Qualtrics to update the “experts list”

Considering transition to a Google Doc

Access Rockquomore’s Writings

There is No Guru Don't Talk About Mentoring Why Mentor Matches Fail



Results to Date

Fall 2015: all new teachers were paired with a mentor and created a map.

New teachers who feel like the conversation is positive and they are being empowered to solve problems

Mentors are indicating less pressure to “know everything”

We have been surprised at the number of experienced teachers who are using the “experts” list to contact other teachers and gain access to new information or resources



References

Greiman, B. C. (2010). Continuing professional development. In Torres, R. M., Kitchel, T., & Ball, A. L. (Eds.), *Preparing and advancing teachers in agricultural education*. Columbus, OH: Curriculum Material Services.

Podsén, I. J., & Denmark, V. (2007). *Coaching and mentoring first year and student teachers (2nd ed)*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Rockquomore, K. A. (April 19, 2010). There is no guru. *Inside Higher Ed*.

Rockquomore, K. A. (October 3, 2011). Don't talk about mentoring. *Inside Higher Ed*.

Rockquomore, K. A. (February 3, 2016). Why mentor matches fail. *Inside Higher Ed*.

How it Works

Within our existing mentoring structure, we implemented two resources to attempt to shift the system to a more needs-based approach.

First, we wanted to solve the problem of how do new teachers know who has the knowledge to meet their needs. We created the **Oregon Teachers Experts List**.

Second resource we created is the **Mentoring Map**. This map idea was borrowed and adapted from National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, run by Rockquomore and colleagues.

New teachers now sit down with their assigned mentor to assess their needs and identify people who can meet that need

As of 2015, the mentoring program is structured:

Late summer:

Pair all first year teachers with a mentor (second year teachers can opt-in)

Early October:

Complete mentoring maps (mentors work with mentees). The mentor's role is only to help mentees discuss needs and complete their map of experts

Every 4-6 weeks during the school year:

Send an email to mentors and/or mentees prompting communication between the pairs and encouraging them to consult their map and/or the experts list to meet their current needs.

Summer Conference:

Assess mentoring experience for previous group and collect data to update experts list for the next year

Future Plans & Advice to Others

Expert list critical to implementing the mentoring map

Without the list, mentees do not know who can meet their needs and they will resort to asking their known network, which may not be able to help at the same level.

Mentor's role is now that of gatekeeper to help the young teachers make connections to others in the profession

Dedicated session during fall agriculture teachers' conference to allow for time to construct their map with their mentor. This structured time was essential.

We think the map idea works for all experience levels.

Further Information

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