



Creating Conditions for Learning

COMP AND MENTORING TEACHERS

The Impact of Mentoring

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One of the premises of the COMP program is teachers working together synergistically to help one another. This is also the basis

COMP (Classroom Organization and Management Program) is designed to empower teachers to Create Conditions for Learning in their classroom and school settings. In addition, COMP is a wonderful vehicle for mentoring new teachers.

The conversations prompted by activities in the COMP Workshop help a new teacher to think through potential classroom issues and challenges with experienced peers. The ideas and resources the new teacher shares within the workshop help provide a professional context for validating the contributions of the individual beginning his/her career. And, the connections built within and across the workshop cohort create a support, encouragement, and accountability network for the induction teacher. In this newsletter issue, we will take a look at some of the ways COMP can be involved in helping to mentor new teachers.

of teacher mentoring, the belief that educators can accomplish more together than they can alone. A teacher mentoring program is vital for teacher efficacy and an effective induction process for novice teachers.

Research reveals that school districts with a structured teacher induction and mentoring program in place reap benefits for both teachers and students.

Reminiscing about my first year as a classroom teacher, I recall the nervous anticipation I felt when I was hired as a secondary language arts instructor in an historic high school in Birmingham, Alabama. The years I dedicated toward earning my degree were finally paying off and I was about to live my dream. I was a teacher. Heart pounding with naïve expectations, I entered into my first classroom armed with a teacher portfolio filled with innovative ideas and the latest technology of the 1990s. I was as prepared as a newly degreed and certified educator could be. However, one essential element was missing, a teacher mentor.

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Sonja Crenshaw-Hill serves beginning teachers in the Birmingham City School District (AL) through her position as a Professional Development Resource Teacher.

COMP and Mentoring in Milwaukee

Lisa Hansen and Lisa Kaemmerer
Lead Induction Specialists
Milwaukee Public Schools

With 34 years combined teaching experience, we have previously attended COMP sessions as classroom teachers, now as mentors for Milwaukee Public Schools, and recently have completed the training to become certified COMP facilitators. As educators in the classroom setting, COMP provided us with specific strategies and supports to address classroom topics including classroom organization



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COMP Theme: Make Visible Your Invisible Expectations



Lisa Hansen and Lisa Kaemmerer support beginning teachers as Lead Induction Specialists with Milwaukee Public Schools (WI).

and arrangement, procedural and behavioral expectations, and motivating students.

As mentors of new teachers in our district, we frequently model and employ COMP strategies in our work with new educators. We often encourage our new teachers to attend COMP training to gain knowledge and skills to help create a classroom culture for learning and academic achievement. In our district, the COMP sessions offered fill up very quickly because teachers are well aware of the benefits and relevance to their success as teachers.

To fully engage beginning teachers in a COMP Workshop, here are some practical ideas for COMP Workshop Leaders:

- Include participants who have teaching experience and a passion for mentoring. Turn concerns from the new teachers over to the entire group by asking questions such as, "How might any of you respond?" or "Who might have experienced something similar?"
- Encourage new teachers to share from their expertise (e.g., fluency with technology, recent resources discovered, empathy for students' perspective).
- Consider using the Focusing Checklist prompts as discussion starters. For example, put the words, "How do," "Why would," "When might," and other reflective starters in front of the prompts provided to build productive small group conversations.

The Impact of Mentoring, Sonja Nicole Hill, *con't from page 1*

While I did attend new teacher orientation and periodic professional development during the school year, I was not assigned a teacher mentor, nor did I participate in COMP training, which might have helped me to locate a mentor of my own. According to research, when highly qualified, trained mentors are paired with new teachers, student achievement is higher, student behavior is improved, teacher attrition is lowered, and the new teacher's enthusiasm is increased (Callahan, 2016).

New teachers encounter several challenges in their initial years in the classroom. Regardless of their pre-service experiences, they are not fully prepared to handle the potentially stressful situations caused by difficult students, the demands for effective academic instruction, and the need to create effective classroom management systems. Fairly quickly, realism will set in and, unless beginning teachers are provided with appropriate support systems and encouragement, they can become ineffective or even leave the profession all together. High quality induction programs are needed to support, guide, mentor, and retain new teachers in the profession.


According to Martin, et al. (2013), while induction programs are common, less than 1% of teachers participate in a formal, multi-year program allowing new teachers within a professional learning community to observe experienced teachers' classrooms, are observed by trained mentors, reflect on their own practices, and collaborate with peers. In addition, induction programs are instrumental in developing within new teachers a competence that may have a positive impact on learning outcomes. The goals of a new teacher induction program are to slow new teacher turnover, strengthen teacher practice, and improve student learning. Induction programs bridge the gap between being a "student of teaching to teacher of students" (Gilles, et al. 2013, p. 78).

Inexperienced teachers lack the background knowledge and skills to maintain the same level of consistent success in the classroom as a veteran teacher. Martin, et al. (2015) explained that some conditions that cause teachers to leave after only one year of teaching include lack of support, feeling ill-equipped for their students, and having a sense of ineffectiveness in the classroom. The "sink-or-swim" mentality at the expense of teachers and students is often implemented in schools but rarely productive. Usually, these conditions are prevalent in districts with low performing schools and high percentages of students of color. However, if new teachers are appointed mentors and participate in a high quality induction program, which can include COMP training, they may be able to overcome these obstacles.




U.S. Army Research Laboratory's photo, [Army mentors students, educators in 3-D design and printing](#) is in the [public domain](#).


COMP's Four Premises




Effective classroom management is proactive.



In effective classrooms, management and instruction work together.



Students are active participants in the learning environment.



Teachers working together help one another in synergistic ways.

COMP Workshop Presentation Slides
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"Oh, this is a happy picture! Welcome to your first year of teaching, Jenn! I am so happy to work with and mentor this talented artist and teacher, so full of positivity, joy and IDEAS!!" [Laura Gilchrist](#) says on Flickr via Instagram (ift.tt/2hOE7WC). Used under a [Creative Commons 2.0 license](#).



Makes my learning a priority by helping me to reflect on my experiences,
Encourages me to put my best foot forward each day,
Notes any needed information I may have overlooked or deadlines for which I may need reminders,
Teaches me to learn about my students – and from them,
Organizes our time together so we can both ask and answer questions, and
Reminds me regularly of the joys, responsibilities, and blessings of being a teacher!

The Impact of Mentoring, Sonja Nicole Hill, *con't from page 4*

Twenty-two years ago when I began teaching, I did not go through formal new teacher induction. I was a product of the “sink or swim” mindset. While I did not have a formal mentor, I was fortunate to be surrounded by skilled educators like my mother, a retired teacher, and other veteran teachers who were more than willing to assist me and share their insight and resources. Upon reflection, I discovered that while my mentoring was informal, the synergistic relationships established, like those promoted through COMP, were invaluable to my development as an educator.

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