Talking Points for Mentor Teachers

Research shows that educators who work collaboratively and engage in regular communication are often stronger and more effective in the classroom. Communication with others in the teaching profession allows one to share ideas and assess and reflect on practice.

Below you will find some specific “talking points” that give you some ideas for working with your student teacher.

Talking Points:

* Ask your student to identify one **management strategy** you intentionally included for a specific lesson. Then ask your student to do the same for a lesson the student teaches. Observe/watch the lesson and reflect with the student on the effectiveness of that strategy. Did it work? Why or why not? What could be done differently?
* As educators we often get excited about particular lesson content. Often this happens when we plan lessons that are different from the “norm” – extra creative. Encourage your student to watch you teach a **creative/innovative lesson** and reflect with him/ her on the lesson. Did this approach work as well as the “more typical”? Then encourage the student to do the same. Did s/he reach more learners with this approach? Did anything need to be refined?
* Planning learning experiences that **reflect the unique needs** of our students should be a goal for every teacher. Discuss with your student teacher how you planned a particular lesson with that in mind and encourage him/her to do the same. Observe the lesson and reflect together on the effectiveness.
* Sometimes we find ourselves **struggling repetitively with particular students or a content area**. Talk about an example of this struggle and encourage your student teacher to brainstorm ideas with you. Identify a strategy or a response the student can try to alleviate some of the frustration. Talk together afterwards about its effectiveness.
* Talk with your student about how you **differentiate** and share how you plan to do so in a lesson. Have the student observe you and reflect upon the strategies together. Then, ask the student to share his/her differentiation goals prior to teaching a lesson. After the student teaches the lesson, reflect with him or her about the effectiveness of the tool.
* One of your goals is to encourage the **development of community** within the classroom. Identify one strategy/tool that you’ve used to do so. Talk with your student teacher about its effectiveness and encourage him/her to do the same.
* Talk with your student about how as educators, we must always self – assess. Share with your student an **observation/conclusion** you’ve made about your own teaching. Ask him/her if s/he has noticed the same thing? Encourage your student teacher to reflect on his/her own teaching with you. Does this observation require a response?
* Is your student teacher struggling with **organization**? Talk with him/her about how you manage organization. Identify a strategy/tool to try.