

Answers to Chapter 2

Comprehension Questions

1. *Which teachers should school or district leaders consider when selecting mentors?*

School and district leaders have numerous factors to consider when selecting mentor teachers. First, select mentors who have achieved either master- or mentor-teacher status. Such educators will have already demonstrated effectiveness in their own teaching skills, particularly with regard to student achievement. Additionally, consider a number of additional guidelines when selecting mentors; for example, mentors should have a minimum of three to five years of teaching experience, teach in the same content areas or at the same grade level as the mentee, have a classroom or office in close proximity to the mentee's classroom, and be older than the mentee. A mentor teacher should also possess a broad knowledge of curriculum and instruction, as well as the interpersonal skills necessary to interact with parents, colleagues, and students in a respectful and professional manner. Furthermore, an ideal mentor can describe and demonstrate effective teaching, agrees with the overall goals of mentoring, is familiar with the unique needs of a beginning teacher, understands the four types of new-teacher support, and engages in self-reflection and continuous improvement in his or her own role as a teacher. Schools and districts must decide which of these guidelines are most essential and relevant to their unique contexts and circumstances.

2. *Describe three ways in which a mentor might build an effective relationship with a mentee.*

Answers will vary. However, potential responses include asking open-ended questions, providing think-time, paraphrasing to clarify and show understanding, offering nonjudgmental statements about teaching behaviors, and modeling positive interactions.

3. *List and briefly describe the four types of new-teacher support.*

The four types of new-teacher support include physical, emotional, instructional, and institutional support. Physical support includes helping the new teacher orient himself or herself to the school building, acclimate to school scheduling, and gather materials and supplies. Emotional support involves having open communication, engaging in deep listening, and offering a shoulder to cry on. Instructional support involves guiding a new teacher's use of instructional strategies and behaviors by providing feedback and prompting reflection. Finally, institutional support involves helping new teachers acclimate to the structures, systems, and cultures of the school building, as well as helping them develop into lifelong learners within the broader education world.

4. *How can a mentor determine which type of support to provide to a mentee?*

The simplest and most effective way to determine which type of support to provide is to ask specific questions and actively listen to the mentee's responses. Such questions include, but are not limited to, the following: What is your most pressing concern at this time? What do you wish you knew right now? What do you wish you had to support you? What is making your job difficult right now? What can I provide that would make your life easier right now? If you had three extra hours in the day, how would you use them?

Based on a mentee's responses, a mentor can interpret which type of support to provide. Provide physical support when the beginning teacher asks questions or expresses concerns regarding supplies, materials, classroom setup, or technology use. Provide emotional support when the beginning teacher expresses difficulty coping, exhaustion, loneliness, or questions the decision to become a teacher. Provide instructional support when the beginning teacher expresses concerns about interactions with parents or students, asks questions about content or instructional strategies, or has difficulties with pacing, student engagement, or classroom management. Finally, provide institutional support when the beginning teacher seems isolated from the rest of the school community, expresses interest in conference opportunities or professional organizations, or asks questions about getting involved at the school, district, or community level.