

MENTORING MATTERS

A Newsletter for Teacher Mentors

Volume 1

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MENTOR SPOTLIGHT MANDY NILES

Mandy has been mentoring for five years and enjoys assisting new teachers in analyzing their craft and setting goals for improvement. She finds her collaborative discussions with her mentees invigorating and motivating and appreciates learning as much from the process as the teachers she mentors.

Mandy sees providing emotional support as a critical part of her mentoring work. During those difficult times, she tries to respond to her mentees with active listening and compassion while asking questions to help her and the mentee understand the feelings behind an emotional response. Mandy acknowledges the emotional roller coaster that all teachers experience, especially during the first few years. Yet she seeks to find the joy in even the small wins and help teachers recognize student progress and growth.



Mandy teaches 6th Grade at Canyon Rim Academy in Millcreek, Utah



Keith is the K-9 Mathematics Coordinator at Early Light Academy in South Jordan.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT KEITH PHINNEY

Keith taught 8th Grade mathematics for the last seven years before becoming a mentor this year. He mentors a beginning teacher and provides coaching support to teachers who need assistance with anything mathematics related. He loves being proactive about considering the supports teachers will need and enjoys helping new teachers see obstacles as opportunities.

Keith enjoys the opportunity to observe teachers or to teach their classes so they can observe their peers. Because his role gives him dedicated time to support teachers, Keith loves having the flexibility to meet teachers' needs. Keith has noticed that beginning teachers are often overcome with emotions of being overwhelmed and he believes that listening and commiserating with mentees helps support them through emotional times.

Mentoring Emotions

Developing skills for addressing emotions can assist mentors in navigating difficult conversations with mentees. Elena Aguilar recommends developing such skills by:

"There's no way we can ... give students what they deserve without attending to the emotions of the adults in the building."

-Elena Aguilar

- **Recognizing and Acknowledging Emotions**

Acknowledging someone's emotions communicates care. You might try phrases like "I hear that your last class was rough. Tell me more." or "It seems like you've got a lot weighing on you. Do you want to talk about it?"

- **Inviting the Person to Name Their Emotion**

Instead of naming the emotion for your mentee ("I can tell you're really angry.") allow the mentee to notice and name their own emotions ("I'm noticing a lot of sadness in what you're sharing. Did I get that right? Are there other emotions you're experiencing?").

- **Communicating Acceptance**

Communicate acceptance by normalizing the emotion ("It's normal to have a whole bunch of feelings in a situation like this.").

- **Encouraging Others to Explore Their Feelings**

Cultivate a healthy relationship with emotions by encouraging others to explore them ("I know you're really having a hard year. If you want to unpack how you're feeling, I'm here.")

Find additional newsletters for mentors and for beginning teachers at

<https://schools.utah.gov/curr/educatordevelopment/teachermentors?mid=5736&tid=4>