

Proposal from Collaborative for Educational Services  
for International Association for K-12 Online Learning's  
**Lessons Learned in Teacher Mentoring:  
Supporting Educators in K-12 Online Learning Environments**

**SYNOPSIS OF TOPICS COVERED:**

This chapter will present a student-centered model for online teacher mentoring. The one-to-many online model is designed to be scalable, self-directed, and leverages social learning. The program introduces teachers to ideas of self-directed learning, partnering pedagogy, proficiency-based learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and metacognition while orienting new and prospective virtual teachers to the online learning environment. To maximize impact and sustainability, this program employs the Cognitive Coaching model through a social learning community.

This chapter will: describe the essential elements of the one-to-many online model, detail lessons learned during the design and implementation, highlight virtual classroom applications, and share narratives from teachers who have completed the mentoring program. Currently in its third iteration, this model is effective, innovative, flexible, and applicable.

**RATIONALE:**

Recent speculations cite that 50% of high school courses will be online by 2019. Effective online learning is not a replication of the traditional classroom; it is interactive, student-centered and maximizes available technology. Most districts are fortunate to have even a handful of teachers who are prepared to teach online courses. Even fewer have teachers equipped to train their colleagues to teach effectively in this new environment. This model highlights the power of districts or organizations to partner with each other to create a rich and diverse intersection of educators and experiences. Instead of approaching mentoring through an insular, single school/district approach and exhausting the resources of a single or small cohort of teachers, this model has found success in decentralizing the mentor and creating a social learning community that is facilitated by one or a few highly qualified online teachers.

**CHAPTER OUTLINE:**

**I. Essential skills K-12 online learners need**

The mentoring program is shaped by a focus on identifying and developing professional development around the essential self-directed learning skills our students need to be successful online learners. The program offers learning experiences for teachers that build empathy and skill.

A. Self-directed learning (SDL): Overview of self-directed learning and necessary skills.

B. SDL connection to online learning: How these skills translate to and impact teaching and learning in an online environment. Explore the vital role SDL skills play in developing critical thinking, motivation, and persistence.

## **II. Essential elements of the mentoring program**

### **A. Design elements**

1. Structure: Design elements of the online learning environment that promote social learning, community building, and differentiated instruction.
2. Technology-rich instructional tools: Multi-media, multi-directional tools are infused in all aspects of the learning environment. These tools encourage online learners to move from comprehension of the tools toward synthesizing tools with content for online instruction.
  - a. Introduce: Strategies for making new technology accessible and making new users comfortable with the online learning environment and selected instructional tools.
  - b. Model: Strategies for raising awareness of how media and medium impact message by delivering content through multiple mediums.
  - c. Scaffold: Strategies for embedding technology in all aspects of the course, especially providing individualized support and differentiated opportunities for beginning to advanced users, which build confidence and community.

### **B. Delivery through a coaching model**

1. Cognitive Coaching model: Overview of the model developed by Art Costa and Bob Garmston with commentary regarding implantation of this model.
2. Partnering for change: How a highly-qualified online teacher partners with traditional classroom teachers to change the classroom approach from teacher-directed learning (TDL) to self-directed learning.
3. Self-assessment, peer review and ePortfolios: Explanation and rationale for how assessment is used as an instructional strategy in the model.

## **III. Implementation of the mentoring program**

### **A. The power of community and social learning**

1. Collaboration: Description of how collaboration is facilitated in the program and how it continues beyond the formal constraints of the program.
2. Social learning: Overview of social learning theory and applications for this program.

### **B. Identifying potential mentors and mentees**

1. Audience: How potential online teachers are identified and why the program is implemented across multiple districts, schools, programs, and communities.
2. Paying it forward: Narratives on how online teachers continue to mentor their peers through informal relationships.

C. Sustaining the mentoring program: Ongoing community-based support: The website created in response to the overwhelming need for more resources and an online professional learning community.

**IV. Virtual classroom applications**

A. Online instructors who have completed the program describe how they implement the skills, tools and strategies learned through the online mentoring model.

B. High school students in virtual classes share their experiences with instructors that position student needs and perspectives at the center of online instructional design.

**V. Online teacher narratives**

Individual narratives from online instructors and mentors illustrate the experiences and challenges faced by online teachers during and after completing the online teacher mentoring program.

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**Casey Daigle-Matos, Technology Project Planner, Instructional Designer and Online Facilitator.** Casey consults with CES faculty in delivering student-centered online course content and identifies instructional technology strategies to enhance online classroom environments. She designs instructional modules and activities, using the Moodle LMS, for the *Effective Coaching for eLearners* graduate course. She also facilitates synchronous webinars and develops materials and face-to-face trainings to introduce online tools to students and staff. Casey coordinates registration, monitoring, reporting and interventions with instructors, administrators, and parents for Virtual High School students. She has a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Smith College, MA.

**Mary Wiseman, Instructional Designer and Online Facilitator.** Mary designs instructional modules and activities using the Moodle LMS for the Algebra Online course. She also developed and implements the online registration process for the course. She collaborates in the development and facilitation of the *Effective Coaching for eLearners* graduate course. Mary solves problems with design and creates learning experiences through instructional online curricula, eLearning courses, job aids, technical procedures, ebooks, blogs, websites, digital work, graphics, videos, and she contributes to eclectic projects for other people and businesses. She has a Masters of Arts in Media Studies from the New School, NY, and a Graduate Certificate in Instructional Design from the University of Wisconsin.

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