

Has administrator training component - will be expanded next year

Project Respect

Retaining Special Education Teachers



U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

refer NERRE project to him

- Mitchell L. Yell, Ph.D. (myell@sc.edu)
- Kathleen J. Marshall, Ph.D.
- Erik Drasgow, Ph.D.
- Michael A. Seaman, Ph.D.
- Meagan Karvonen, M.A.

<http://edpsych.ed.sc.edu/respect/>

Project ReSpecT

Purpose of Project

The purpose of Project ReSpecT is to increase special education teacher retention through the development and implementation of a mentoring model for new special education teachers.

Project Overview: Year One (2000-01)

Research and Development of the Model

- Review of literature on reasons for attrition and retention, and research on effectiveness of various mentoring models
- Confirmation and elaboration of research findings via statewide teacher survey and three focus groups
- Develop components of mentoring model, validate with Project Planning Team

Project Overview: Year Two (2001-02)

Initial Implementation and Refinement

- Implement model in a school district
- Refine model with input from Project Planning Team and participating teachers
- Develop notebooks for mentors and mentees

Project Overview: Year Three (2002-03)

Expansion, Refinement, and Dissemination

- Full implementation of model
- Develop modules and manuals for training administrators, teachers, and mentors
- Disseminate project model through web site
- Evaluate impact of model on teacher retention

Project Overview: Year Four (2003-04)

Expansion, Refinement, and Dissemination

- Full implementation of model in 25 school districts across South Carolina
- Develop modules and manuals for training administrators, teachers, and mentors
- Disseminate project model through web site
- Evaluate impact of model on teacher retention

Educator Survey Results

(Top factors that contributed to leaving the classroom)

*Too much paperwork	*51%
*Responsible for too many types of students	*46%
*Lack of planning time	*46%
*Responsible for too many students	*42%
*Lack of support from parents	*37%
*Discipline problems in the classroom	*34%
*Limited opportunity for professional growth	*31%
*Low pay/benefits	*30%
*Lack of support from administrators	*29%
*Saw limited academic improvement in students	*28%
*Lack of support from other teachers/staff	*27%

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Educator Survey Results (Top conditions that would have contributed to staying)	
•Less paperwork	•47%
•Having fewer students	•42%
•Additional planning time	•39%
•Better pay and benefits	•39%
•Better administrative support	•24%
•More professional growth opportunities	•24%
•Better support from special education admin.	•23%
•Better support from other teachers and staff	•22%
•Fewer non-teaching responsibilities	•19%
•More recognition for my efforts	•19%

Educator Survey Results (Top factors that would have made first year experience better)	
•Better classroom resources and materials	•62%
•Being assigned to a mentor	•58%
•More planning time	•50%
•More support for classroom management	•42%
•More orientation about special education P&P	•41%
•Fewer students in my classroom	•39%
•Opportunities for ongoing training	•36%
•More orientation about district and school P&P	•30%

Educator Survey Results (Induction Experience)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 16% of respondents participated in a formal induction program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 100% had a mentor in the same school ◆ 79% had a mentor in the same area of special ed. ◆ 76% had a mentor in the same type of classroom ■ Respondents engaged in a wide range of activities (procedural, instructional, coping, etc.) with their mentor ■ More than two-thirds of respondents with a mentor said they were pleased with the quality of the match with their mentor ■ 69% site the mentoring experience was "excellent-good" 	

Special Educator Survey Results (Top factors that would have made first year experience better)	
•Better classroom resources and materials	•62%
•More planning time	•55%
•Being assigned to a mentor	•44%
•More support for classroom management	•43%
•More orientation about special education P&P	•43%
•Fewer students in my classroom	•38%
•Opportunities for ongoing training	•31%
•More orientation about district and school P&P	•31%

Special Educator Survey Results (Induction Experience)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 41% of respondents participated in a formal induction program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 100% had a mentor in the same school ◆ 58% had a mentor in the same area of special ed. ◆ 51% had a mentor in the same type of classroom ■ 73% said they were pleased with the quality of the teaching style match with their mentor ■ 88% said they were pleased with the quality of the personality match with their mentor ■ 78% said their mentoring experience was "excellent" or "good" 	

Types of Mentoring Activities (Stayers vs. leavers)		
Activity	% Sp	% Ed
Observed mentor teaching	44	53
Mentor observed me	67	60
Explained paperwork & procedures	68	75
Ideas about classroom management	53	55
Ideas about instruction	58	57
Helped me feel welcome at school	76	77
Listened when I wanted to talk	74	60
Other	9	6

Project ReSpecT

Open-Ended Survey Results

- Both groups of respondents provided recommendations for a mentoring program:
- Appropriate recruitment, selection, and pairing of mentors with new teachers
 - Provide time for the mentor to be available for mentoring duties
 - Small group meetings of new teachers for support and shared learning
 - Orientation and time with the mentor prior to the beginning of the school year
 - Common planning time for mentor and new teacher

Open-Ended Survey Responses

- Recommended mentoring activities:
- Assisting with selecting, developing, and adapting curriculum
 - Education about realistic job expectations, where to get support
 - Observing classrooms of experienced teachers
 - Educating about paperwork, policies, and where things are located in the school
 - Assisting with developing IEPs and holding parent-teacher conferences
 - Advising about planning, organization, and time management

Guiding Principles and Practices

- Implementing the model should require as little paperwork as possible.
 - ◆ Feedback from participants will be solicited on a regular basis to make the data collection requirements as user-friendly as possible.
- New teachers will have more intensive needs at the beginning of the year. Needs will vary during the second half of the year.
 - ◆ New teachers will complete a self-assessment instrument each marking period to determine priorities for mentoring activities for the next marking period.

Guiding Principles and Practices

- Experienced teachers should not be expected to take on mentoring responsibilities as an additional duty without compensation or time allotted to fulfill the mentoring role.
 - ◆ Districts will be asked to release mentors from teaching for one hour per week plus one day per month

Domains in the Model

- Logistical
- Emotional
- Methodological
- Coping
- Self-evaluation
- Professional Development

Timeline

- Before school year starts
 - ◆ Mentor training
 - ◆ One-day orientation for new teachers (including lunch with mentor)

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First Marking Period

- School-level orientation
- At least 2 observations (mentor observing new teacher)
- At least 1 time for mentee to observe another teacher
- Monthly meetings: mentors and new teachers
- Weekly informal contacts
- Co-write 1 IEP
- Mentor observes 1 IEP meeting
- Attend grade-level planning meeting
- End of marking period: self-evaluation meeting

Second Marking Period

- At least 2 observations (mentor observing new teacher)
- At least 1 time for new teacher to observe another teacher
- Monthly meetings: mentors and new teachers
- Bi-monthly informal contacts
- End of marking period: self-evaluation

Third Marking Period

- At least 1 observation (mentor observing new teacher)
- Monthly meetings: mentors and new teachers
- Weekly informal contacts
- End of marking period: self-evaluation

Fourth Marking Period

- At least 1 observation (mentor observing new teacher)
- Monthly meetings: mentors and new teachers
- Weekly informal contacts
- End of marking period: self evaluation meeting
- End of school year, participate in project evaluation

Mentor characteristics

- Interest in being a mentor
- Able to make necessary time commitment
- Able to work well with others
- A reputation as an excellent practitioner
- Knowledgeable in each of these important areas: paperwork, classroom management and instruction
- Not a part of the ADEPT evaluation team

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.education.southcarolina.edu. The page title is "Project ReSpecT". There are several navigation buttons: "Home", "About", "Planning Tools", "Project Participant", and "Links". Below these buttons is the heading "Retaining Special Education Teachers". The main text describes the project as a three-year, federally funded project conducted by the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of South Carolina. The purpose is to increase special education teacher retention through the development and implementation of a mentoring model to support early career special education teachers. The project will include the following three stages:

- Phase 1: Synthesizing existing literature and practices, surveying South Carolina special education teachers who remain in the field and those who leave, and developing a mentoring model.
- Phase 2: Validating the mentoring model in three school districts in South Carolina.