Co-Teaching Strategies

Coaching & Stepping In
This is when an intern is teaching, mentors position themselves so they can offer advice and suggestions or be available so that the intern could ask for help in the middle of the lesson through a knowing glance or a question posed to the mentor. At times, a mentor might move right into the intern's lesson, briefly taking over the teaching before turning things back to the intern. It is important that the mentor pay close attention to what the intern is doing & saying so that he/she can offer suggestions.

The intern must be comfortable asking the mentor questions about what to do even while the lesson is going on & the mentor must be ready to respond. The mentor & intern might huddle together, talk softly, assess the lesson and decide what direction to take the lesson.

Some mentors and interns are so in sync with each other that an exchange of glances would cue the mentor to provide help on the spot. Or, the mentor could mouth or whisper something such as “Ask the students if they have other ideas.” Most mentors wait for the intern to signal that they don’t know what to do next.

Teaching Together
This is sometimes called collaborative teaching or “co-teaching.” Collaborative teaching is really when both the mentor and the intern are involved in the lesson. Maybe the mentor would start the lesson and the mentor would do it along with the intern. Or, maybe, the mentor and the intern are both circulating and helping the students simultaneously.

Co-teaching means that the mentor and intern teach together as partners, sharing the leadership of the lesson. Prior to teaching the lesson the mentor and the intern will determine who will lead which portion of the lesson.

Brief Interactions or Mentoring on the Move
These are interactions that occur before & after teaching. For example, in between teaching times, the mentor & the intern bounce ideas, comments, & suggestions among each other whenever they have a few minutes together. These brief interactions throughout the day are important occasions for mentoring because they are informal in nature and are often spontaneous. The mentor is responding spontaneously as opposed to setting an agenda in a formal mentor session.
**Mentoring Sessions & Debriefing Sessions**

This occurs when mentors and interns hold regularly scheduled sessions that take place either in the classroom when the students are gone or somewhere else in the school.

During a “debriefing” session, the mentor guides the intern through a reflection on either the intern’s teaching or the mentor’s teaching. More than likely, the mentors lead the conversation, moving it through the points that they had on their mind. With thoughtful guidance, the mentor tries to teach the intern how to reflect on his/her teaching by analyzing the lesson together.

**Co-planning**

This is when the mentor & intern work together to design learning activities that lead to either the mentor or the intern or both are teaching. Helping the intern plan the lesson is collaborative, although the mentor “may or may not” be directly involved in the delivery of the lesson, the mentor gives helpful input and shares ideas.

**Videotape Analysis**

By analyzing the other’s teaching, the mentor and the intern could talk about what each saw and how they understood it. They could recall what they were thinking and what prompted each of their actions & the students’ action and thus gain insights into their teaching.

**Writing**

Some mentors & novices use journal writing to provide a means of recording thoughts and questions that might otherwise be forgotten or left unspoken. Writing is a tool for reflection and a means or working out ideas over time. These ideas can be shared for discussion.

Mentoring is an educational intervention. Forms of mentoring are used to support the interns and promote the interns’ learning. Mentors take the people they work with (some are just hanging on & others are well prepared) and provide them with guidance to become a successful teacher. Mentors who embrace educational mentoring learn to mentor by developing a practice that draws from a repertoire of forms of the work. Mentors who purposefully structure opportunities for their interns’ learning bring them further along in their learning than do mentor teachers who view their role as simply providing advice, emotional support & technical pointers. **Both interns & mentors gain deeper insight into their own teaching when mentors and novices together plan teach, reflect on their actions.**

**These strategies are taken from an article by Sharon Schwille.**