Instructional Needs of Beginning Teachers

The instructional needs category is immense as it pertains to the more advanced, higher-level needs of a beginning teacher, such as creativity, problem-solving, differentiation, lack of prejudice, etc. It includes any needs a teacher has that affect his/her ability to plan lessons effectively, deliver quality instruction to every student in the classroom, and assess learning. Instructional needs also include topics such as building relationships with parents and students, scheduling, and grading. An instructional need could be related to help with locating materials for a particular lesson, or it could involve assistance with teaching a group of special education students who are in the class.

Due to recent changes in our teacher evaluation systems, beginning teachers may need their mentors to help with writing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). Like in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, once these instructional needs are satisfied and beginning teachers begin to gain self-esteem and confidence in the classroom, they will begin to develop a sense of efficacy. Teachers who have a sense of efficacy are more likely to exhibit the specific teaching behaviors that foster their own professional growth and the academic growth of their students. Efficacy is, therefore, one of the overarching goals of any mentoring relationship.

The following bulleted list includes potential instructional needs of beginning teachers, but should not be considered an all-inclusive list.

Instructional

- Support for data analysis/writing SLOs
- Instructional support – instructional technology, lesson planning, pedagogy, content knowledge, assessment strategies, reflection
- Professionalism – professional organization membership, life-long learning, advocacy
- Classroom management – working with specific groups of students (poverty, special education, behavioral, ESL), classroom management plans, engagement
- Parental contacts – ongoing communication, conferences
- Location of resources – people or materials