

## What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

“This book is packed with useful ideas, strategies, and clear action steps for supporting new teacher induction with a student-centered philosophy at its core. In both translating the research and describing educators’ lived experiences, Amanda Brueggeman has created a timely resource that will resonate with classroom teachers, school and district leaders. When put into practice, the strategies in this book will help in shaping mastery environments in which everyone in an educational setting shares the belief that individually and collectively they have the capability to impact positive improvement.”

—Jenni Donohoo

Provincial Literacy Lead Council of Ontario Directors of Education  
Author, *Collective Efficacy*

“*Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students at the Heart of New Teachers’ Learning* is a thoughtful and timely book. Amanda Brueggeman’s core belief that ‘empowering others to grow and make an impact on students is important for our future’ gets at both a practical and moral imperative: we need ways of supporting new teachers that are compassionate and impactful if we want to change the trajectory of the teacher shortage we currently face. With practical tips, a solid framework, and plenty of examples from her own experience in the field, *Student-Centered Mentoring* does just that.”

—Leanna Harris

Author and Consultant, Diane Sweeney Consulting

“*Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students at the Heart of New Teachers’ Learning* is a welcomed resource in an untapped market. Amanda Brueggeman’s book provides specific student-centered strategies, tips, and tools for mentors to utilize while partnering with new teachers to propel student learning. By putting students at the heart of mentoring, new teachers will be provided with ongoing and meaningful support that allows them to reflect and refine instruction based on current student evidence. This is a must read for anyone who supports new teachers, mentors, coaches, principals, and district leadership.”

—Joy Casey

Consultant, Diane Sweeney Consulting

“Given the complexity of the teaching profession, individuals beginning their career need comprehensive support with systems, pedagogy, and meeting students’ needs while managing their own. There are many approaches districts take to equip these ambitious colleagues. *Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students at the Heart of New Teachers’ Learning* creates a unique layered process for developing the mentor’s skillset to meet the teachers’ learning needs while establishing the student focus from day one. Undoubtedly, Amanda Brueggeman’s system, including the strategies and action steps provided, will transform the impact mentors have on our newest colleagues as well as the students they serve well beyond their first years.”

—Julie Steele

Consultant, Diane Sweeney Consulting

“*Student-Centered Mentoring* is an inspiring guide for any educator tasked with supporting new teachers. We all know that being a new teacher involves a unique set of challenges. This book presents a multilayered approach to support the varied needs of new teachers, all while keeping student engagement and growth at the center of mentor-mentee’s collective work. Full of questions mentors can ask new teachers to support effective management and instruction, processes for goal-setting and reflecting, and tips for giving effective feedback, this resource allows us to envision the power of collaborative partnerships to build new teacher confidence and give the essential support that is often lacking in induction programs today.”

—Amber Birch Trujillo

Consultant, Diane Sweeney Consulting

“As we think about teaching and learning in the era of Covid-19, *Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students at the Heart of New Teachers’ Learning* is essential. Now more than ever, we have a collective imperative to develop beliefs and habits of mind in new teachers that serve students in meaningful, enduring ways. Bringing together the latest research on teacher development, trends in teaching and learning, and a robust set of anecdotes, Amanda Brueggeman does a masterful job at laying a foundation for those in charge of new teacher development programs. The way that she advocates for student-centered mentoring will help new and veteran teachers alike remain energized by the work we’re all called to do as educators.”

—Quinton P. Walker

Head of the High School  
University School of Nashville, TN

“*Student-Centered Mentoring* is a must-read for every mentor, instructional coach, and educational leader. Amanda Brueggeman’s book shares the limitless possibilities of fostering relationships, building engaging dynamics, and creating effective change through mentorships! Her work is both student-centered and teacher-supportive. She illuminates the possibilities of building teacher leadership and fostering teacher capacity. She offers strategies on collaboration, navigating difficult dialogue, and grounding this work in keeping our students at the focus. This book is an educator’s dream!”

—Jigisha Vyas

Instructional Coach  
Wyckoff School District, NJ

“In the ever-evolving field of education, it is critical for new teachers to begin their careers with the ongoing support and guidance of a mentor. *Student-Centered Mentoring* offers precise, practical strategies for mentors to help mentees establish systems of beliefs and practices that keep student learning at the forefront of teaching. Envisioning “school as a system with student growth at the heart,” this resource provides readers with recommendations for examining philosophies, scenarios to guide learning, and frameworks to create a deep and sustainable system of mentorship. The wide range of joys and challenges experienced when mentoring new teachers is presented with the ultimate (and attainable) goal of improving outcomes for all students.”

—Sarah Valter

Literacy Coach  
Lindbergh Schools, MO

“This book is a must-have for mentors. Amanda Brueggeman advocates for a shift from a traditional, top-down mentoring model, where new teacher and mentor conversations revolve around the most important reason for teaching: students. The author explains how mentors can build the capacity of new teachers through reflective conversations about their existing skills, mindsets, and how to understand and assess the effect their teaching moves have on student learning outcomes. The strategies and action steps presented in each chapter provide mentors with a variety of methods to engage their new teacher, from emotional intelligence to collaborative learning experiences.”

—Rachel Jenner

Instructional Coach/Consultant  
Rockingham County Public Schools, VA

*“Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students at the Heart of New Teacher’s Learning* is a must read for anyone who is an educational leader or planning to take on a leadership role in the K-12 environment. This tool is full of actionable ideas for the mentors, coaches, and administrators dedicated to developing an authentic and dynamic student-centered culture. Mentors who put these strategies in place will make a lasting positive change in the lives of their staff members and their students.”

—Joseph Perry,  
K-6 STEM Educator  
Simmons Elementary School, PA

# **Student-Centered Mentoring**

*This book is dedicated to my nieces and nephews (adoptive ones too!).*

*Also, to all of my godchildren.*

*Always believe in yourself!*

# Student-Centered Mentoring

Keeping Students at the Heart  
of New Teachers' Learning

Amanda Brueggeman

Foreword by Diane Sweeney

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For additional resources related to  
*Student-Centered Mentoring: Keeping Students  
at the Heart of New Teachers' Learning*,  
please visit the companion website at  
[resources.corwin.com/studentcenteredmentoring](https://resources.corwin.com/studentcenteredmentoring)

# FOREWORD



We are at a crossroads. We can either bring talented teachers into the workforce and support them in meaningful ways, or we can continue down the path of looming teacher turnover and shortages. According to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, “A lack of sufficient, qualified teachers threatens students’ ability to learn (Darling-Hammond 1999; Ladd and Sorensen 2016). Instability in a school’s teacher workforce (i.e., high turnover and/or high attrition) negatively affects student achievement and diminishes teacher effectiveness and quality” (Garcia and Weiss, 2019).

*Student-Centered Mentoring* by Amanda Brueggeman reimagines how we serve and support teachers entering the profession. While most educators will tell you that early in their career they received some form of induction or mentoring, the focus is often on things like accessing resources, understanding district programs, and following district procedures. Taking this approach places the students in the background rather than the forefront of mentoring conversations. We can do better. What if mentoring also focused on creating classrooms where students learned at the highest levels? This book frames that vision by answering the following questions.

***How can we think more broadly about mentee support so that it addresses student learning as well as teachers’ emotional needs, communication strategies, physical aspects of the classroom, and instructional practice?***

If we think of new teachers as empty vessels to be filled, then we are missing the point. Rather, they are members of our community who need multifaceted systems of support. These layers of support include shared learning, building a collective mindset, opportunities for observational learning, and providing mentees with in-depth support across the year. Throughout the book, these layers are expanded upon in order to provide methods and strategies for this important work.

***How do Student-Centered Coaching and Student-Centered Mentoring compare?***

In the first chapter of the book, Brueggeman compares Student-Centered Coaching with Student-Centered Mentoring. While they are built on the same philosophical footing, they do serve different purposes, which makes these distinctions important. For example, she suggests that the mentor is the primary support for the mentee throughout the year. They collaborate regularly and may even partner together in a coaching cycle. The coach, on the other hand, is charged with partnering with all teachers in the school, and this may include facilitating coaching cycles, team meetings, informal planning support, and other instructional coaching work.

***How do we take care of mentees while at the same time helping them take care of their students?***

If we integrate a student-centered philosophy into our thinking about mentoring, then we will be better able to design our work to impact the lives of our students. For example, when working with a mentee, do we keep an eye on how specific teaching behaviors are impacting student learning? Do we use student evidence to confirm our theories about what best practice might look like in any given classroom? Are we able to purposefully connect teaching and learning? These practices will inevitably lead to a more Student-Centered Mentoring program. Even more importantly, they will set up new teachers with the tools they'll need to be sure every decision they make is in the best interest of their students.

***What if we applied the practices for Student-Centered Coaching to a mentoring context?***

While Student-Centered Coaching is typically implemented broadly across a school, there are ways we can use coaching cycles to support mentees. For example, in Chapter 6, the author recommends partnering mentors and mentees in coaching cycles. This provides the opportunity to collaborate together when establishing a standards-based goal, developing success criteria, and co-planning lessons. The coach then co-teaches in both classrooms, serving as a bridge between the mentor and mentee. This allows the mentor and mentee to build a culture of collective efficacy as they learn from one another while being guided by the coach.

### *In Closing*

It's been ten years since I first met Amanda. At the time, she was a fourth-grade teacher and I was working with her district's team of literacy coaches. We were looking for a classroom where we could practice our coaching moves, and when I asked if there might be a teacher who we could recruit for this purpose, one of the coaches suggested her. We spent the afternoon collecting student evidence and practicing our co-teaching strategies with her students. A few years later, I wasn't surprised when she became a literacy coach herself. Later, as Amanda worked to earn her doctorate, she chose to focus her research on how mentoring could be a more student-centered endeavor, leading to this book. More recently, she has joined our team of coaching consultants.

The progression that Amanda went through as she grappled with how to most effectively mentor new teachers is the same process that I went through decades ago as I struggled to coach in a way that impacted teacher and student learning. She and I share the belief that we must find ways to provide differentiated and needs-based support to teachers at all stages of their careers. *Student-Centered Mentoring* not only provides useful strategies, it is grounded in a set of beliefs that are about meeting new teachers where they are and offering just what they need to brave the inevitable storms of being a new teacher.

—Diane Sweeney

Author of: *The Essential Guide for Student-Centered Coaching* (2020), *Leading Student-Centered Coaching* (2018), *Student-Centered Coaching: The Moves* (2017), and *Student-Centered Coaching from a Distance* (2021)



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Mentors are in every aspect of life, both personal and professional. Some of us have a never-ending list, and some only have a few. Either way, a mentor supports, assists, encourages, listens, and does so many other actions that make a difference.

To my many, many mentors—I would not be where I am today without the guidance and support of so many special people in my life. So I am going to try my best to acknowledge as many as I can now.

To my mom and dad—From before I was born, you all have been preparing to raise me in an environment where I can thrive. You both did without, on more than one occasion, to make that happen. Thank you for being my first models of love and care. Thank you for instilling the work ethic and persistence I have depended on time and time again. Mom—I know you are still guiding me as you look down on me from heaven. I continue to hear your voice in the back of my mind day after day. Dad—I still look up to you in how you pour your heart and soul into your farming passion. Just as I admired your will from the time I was little, I will keep watching you be the amazing role model you are!

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To my Valley Park colleagues—You all were my beginning mentors and helped me get my start in teaching. Laura McCoy—I am proud I was able to be your student teacher and then colleague. Thank you for showing me the ropes as I began my teaching career.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Amanda Brueggeman,** EdD, is a literacy coach and consultant with over 17 years in education. She grew up on a farm in Southeast Missouri and then worked her way to the suburbs of St. Louis, where she taught at Valley Park and Wentzville for ten years prior to being a coach. Amanda holds her doctorate of education in teacher leadership from Maryville University,

where she is also currently an adjunct professor for the education department. An area she is passionate about is collective efficacy in relation to working with students, teachers, instructional coaches, and pre-service teachers. In her free time, Amanda enjoys spending time with her husband, Jay, and hanging out with friends, as well as traveling to see family.



# INTRODUCTION



## BELIEFS ARE AT OUR CORE



The beliefs we hold are the cornerstone of what you say and the actions you take. Our mindset can be heavily guarded because we tend to fall back on our experiences and cultural background from childhood until our most recent life moments. Some of these experiences are effective, and some, well, should probably be forgotten. Either way, as humans we can be very passionate about what our brains and hearts hold on to. Teachers are no different. Although educators are especially heartfelt in our joy of being around students and our passion to build their love for learning, there is no getting around the fact that our beliefs impact our instructional practices.

For over fifteen years, I have worked directly with beginning teachers, teacher mentors, students, and administrators supporting the development of educators as they build and refine their instructional practices and effectiveness in the classroom. My experience has helped me realize that there are four core beliefs that are fundamental to my success:

- 1.** I believe empowering others to grow and make an impact on students is important for our future.
- 2.** I believe learning is a process and so is teaching. You cannot have one without the other.
- 3.** I believe in relying on others, our knowledge, and our experiences to help brave life's storms and see the beauty in those storms, too.
- 4.** I believe in setting goals and being prepared to try again and again and again, both personally and professionally.

What do you believe? Let's begin our work as mentors by taking a journey down memory lane and thinking back to the experiences

that have shaped our beliefs. As you read about my four core belief statements, consider the questions I pose to help you form thoughts of your own.

***I believe empowering others to grow and make an impact on students is important for our future.***

Think about a former student who you've seen years after having them in your class. Maybe they came back to visit you in your classroom, or you passed them at the grocery store or a restaurant. The moment they ask if you remember who they are, you have trouble containing yourself. Of course, you remember! You probably remember their seat in the classroom, how they behaved socially or academically, and maybe even who their best friend was. You may also remember the rituals, songs, books read, or even symbols or visuals that helped that student learn. Despite how old you feel when they say their age, you immediately hope for their continued success.

As I write this, one of my most memorable classes is about to graduate from high school. They were the class I looped with; the class that I formed relationships with like no other because of the extended time we were together. Now, I see them making life decisions and succeeding, in big and small ways. Those fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms may have been years ago, but the memories of them come flooding back whenever I see Facebook posts from those students about their upcoming graduation and college decisions. I remember their group presentations about the weather and the important conversations we had about how to encourage each other to speak in front of the class. I also remember the vulnerable discussions we had about divorce while reading *Hatchet*, where time just seemed to get away from us. Those memories remind me of my commitment—to keep student learning at the forefront of my thinking and actions. No matter how big or small, the symbols or rituals we implore will impact their memory more than we may ever know. Because if remembering those times gives me hope, passion, and purpose, I can only wonder what my past students recall that could be empowering to them.

*As you reflect on this core belief, consider these questions:*

- 1.** What learning experiences can you recall with your students, as a student, at school, and/or at home?
- 2.** Do you have symbols or rituals that stand out from your childhood and/or years of teaching?

***I believe learning is a process and so is teaching. You cannot have one without the other.***

If I ever say again to my husband, “I want to go back to get another degree,” he would be inclined to say no. I guarantee our bank account would look a lot different without all of my school loans! But despite the fact that I think I am done earning degrees, I have found other learning opportunities and can without a doubt say I still have more to learn in life.

As a literacy coach, one learning area I am still developing is my knowledge of phonics development in the younger grades. My teaching background was mostly upper elementary, so I have had to really push myself to learn how to support teachers and learners in the area of foundational reading skills. It has been a focus of mine for several years, and yet I still learn more with each webinar or book I read.

I have also learned to be okay with vulnerability. Over the years, my willingness to attempt something I know nothing about in front of others has increased both as an educator and in my personal life. For example, I have spent the last three years learning to lift weights properly, and I’ll let you in on a little secret, I actually kind of enjoy it now! But when I first started, I was a nervous wreck when someone other than my husband would watch me lift because my form was far from perfect. However, coming to grips with vulnerability has helped me become the teacher I am today. I have learned that perfection does not occur every time, and I must work to model quality practices and performance both professionally and personally, which includes vulnerability.

*As you reflect on this core belief, consider these questions:*

1. What skills and attributes do you believe are needed to teach all learners?
2. How do you view learning for yourself and all students?

***I believe in relying on others, our knowledge, and our experiences to help brave life’s storms and see the beauty in those storms, too.***

From an early age, my parents taught me to leave a legacy of collectiveness. When I was in my twenties, my mom passed away. However, her impact on my growth as a person still continues. She was known for being so helpful, giving great advice, and pushing others to work for a cause. In the end, she shaped the lives of countless

individuals. I want to be remembered like that. I want to find the good in a situation or a solution to a problem. Rather than choosing to let something get me down, I want to grow. But I know I cannot do that alone.

That is why I am committed to promoting a positive and collaborative school culture. Currently, our world is balancing positive versus negative as we work to recover from the effects of COVID-19. I have witnessed colleagues work together and many find the best opportunities in the virtual experiences. I have found myself spending more time learning through webinars and reading more, but I also have found a new love for Twitter and online meetings. Technology has allowed me to form and maintain connections to other educators across the country, like my Diane Sweeney Consulting Group and Teachers College Staff Developers. I will be able to depend on these relationships for many years to come. If living through a pandemic can teach our world anything, it is that working together to achieve a better world is the puzzle piece that could make the biggest difference in bringing people together. And it is this same mindset that is key for Student-Centered Mentoring—we have to work together as a team and be supportive to grow our impact.

*As you reflect on this core belief, consider these questions:*

1. Who has influenced your life and in what ways?
2. What peer interactions can you remember that resulted in important learning experiences?

***I believe in setting goals and being prepared to try again and again and again, both personally and professionally.***

I am sometimes afraid of a challenge and what change can bring, like being afraid of a storm and its aftermath. Those last moments I sat by my mom's hospital bed were consumed with thoughts of how unsure I was about life without her. As time has passed, I remember moments with her—like when she helped me organize my classroom library on several occasions. That classroom library was always a daunting task to me, and I never felt I got it perfect, but I kept trying. I even remember being encouraged to apply for a literacy coach position and thinking, “If I struggle with arranging a classroom library, how can I even be remotely qualified to be a literacy coach!” But instead of consuming my thoughts with “I can't,” I chose to set a goal to learn more



and capitalize on my strengths that could instead help teachers and students. I leaned on the guidance of many to assist in that work, as well as many other learning moments.

After a year as literacy coach, I decided to get my doctorate. It was a high achieving goal and one in which I depended on the advice of my husband, family, and colleagues in order to fully invest in attempting. There were times that I had to redo a project or get feedback to make something better, but in the end, that time and energy helped me grow in my coaching position. Revising my goals after receiving constructive feedback and advice has also been important in my personal growth—which are characteristics I learned from my mom and others who have supported me along the way. All of this learning has opened doors to other opportunities, like consulting, that makes me proud to spread the knowledge of Student-Centered Coaching and Student-Centered Mentoring to others around the country in order to impact even more students' learning. This is why I am committed to accepting challenges and working collaboratively toward making an impact. I know my mom would want me to continue to follow my passion to teach and collectively do what is right for students—never giving up, even when it might become tough.

*As you reflect on this core belief, consider these questions:*

1. What is your learning identity that helps you to achieve your goals—preferred style, methods, and passions?
2. What are the qualities of your most notable mentors?

## UNCOVER YOUR EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS

The four beliefs I shared have come to fruition over my lifetime of experiences and are the core values of *Student-Centered Mentoring*. Ultimately, an underlying purpose of choosing to serve rather than looking for appreciation was the reason I developed this approach. It is my hope that *Student-Centered Mentoring* will guide your journey to a similar purpose and make your role of mentoring a little easier. In addition, think about how you can challenge others to consider their beliefs as they learn about Student-Centered Mentoring and even adjust their values to develop their mindset. To help you with that work, here (Figure 1.1) is a summary of the questions connected to each of my beliefs.

Figure 1.1 Summary of Belief Questions

What Are Your Educational Beliefs?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What learning experiences can you recall with your students, as a student, at school, and/or at home?</li><li>2. Do you have symbols or rituals that stand out from your childhood and/or years of teaching?</li><li>3. What skills and attributes do you believe are needed for teaching all learners?</li><li>4. How do you view learning for yourself and all students?</li><li>5. Who has influenced your life and in what ways?</li><li>6. What peer interactions can you remember that resulted in important learning experiences?</li><li>7. What is your learning identity that helps you to achieve your goals—preferred style, methods, passions?</li><li>8. What are the qualities of your most notable mentors?</li></ol>



### MENTOR TIP

Using your responses to the belief questions, develop a list of your core belief statements around educational practices.

## WHAT IS STUDENT-CENTERED MENTORING?

Student-Centered Mentoring is a collaborative approach for mentors and mentees that focuses heavily on the impact of students' learning using the layers of support in progression from foundational to in-the-moment learning (Figure 1.2). Traditional mentoring differs in that it concentrates the support and professional learning solely on teachers growing expertise in their content area. It can often be viewed as more evaluative and focused on teacher actions rather than student outcomes.

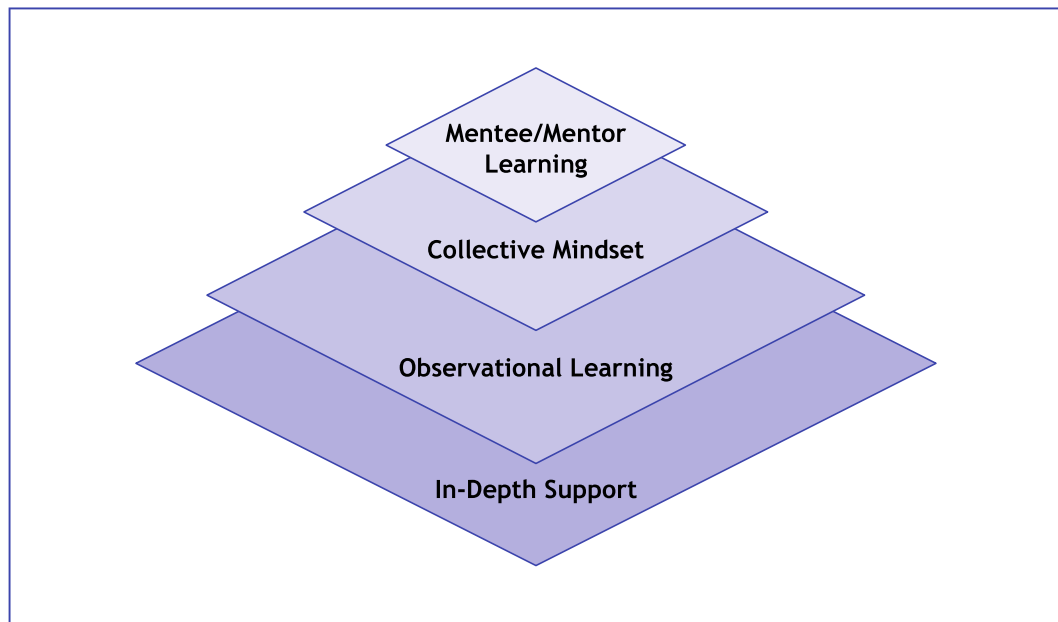
Student-Centered Mentoring

- Collaboration around the impact of instruction on students' learning

Traditional Mentoring

- Teacher-centered focus on mentee's actions and content area

Figure 1.2 Layers of Student-Centered Mentoring



## MENTEE/MENTOR LEARNING

The first layer encompasses the start of many beginning teacher programs using a student-centered approach. Most new teacher programs primarily showcase teacher-centered methods, so it is a shift in information and processes to be inclusive of a student-centered lens. This layer focuses on the time spent with mentees before walking into their first day of school but is also incorporated into the continuous

work you engage in with your mentee throughout the year. Mentor learning is also integral because it has been shown that teacher retention increases when mentors receive support as well.

## COLLECTIVE MINDSET

Student-Centered Mentoring is more than just a structure to support new teachers and mentors; it is also a shift in our educational mindset. This next layer uses the research behind brain-based learning to promote the mindset and viewpoints that can be most supportive in shifting to a student-centered approach with new teacher programs. Believing in our potential coupled with the fact that our profession is increasing in demand of time and energy brings about the importance of working collectively to make an impact on students. Additionally, providing a format for collaborative reflection and goal-setting conversations is pertinent for building an effective mentee/mentor partnership. This will then help increase collective efficacy with the mentee/mentor as well as with the instructional coach, administrators, and other staff.

## OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

All educators find value in watching others learn. So why not have mentors and new teachers learn together as well as from each other. The third layer of support makes student learning visible to new teachers and mentors in a joint setting. Multiple observation options can be used where individuals as well as other colleagues and administrators can have a visual understanding of teaching practices. Whether the new teacher observes their mentor or the two of them visit another host classroom the learning is extended to more than just the beginning teacher. The mentor and new teacher duo provides empowerment and accountability in the partnership.

## IN-DEPTH SUPPORT

The last layer of support incorporates Student-Centered Coaching into the new teacher and mentor partnership. Mentor Coaching Cycles are instructional coaching cycles that include both the mentee and mentor and focus on the students from both classrooms. Coaching, in general, provides teachers with in-the-moment learning centered on increasing the effect of their instructional practices. Mentor Coaching Cycles creates a triad collaboration team that encourages not only new teachers but also mentors in going from surface to deep learning.

## WHY STUDENT-CENTERED MENTORING?

There are four key characteristics for providing a tiered system of learning through the lens of students: support, impact, mind frame, and growth.

### SUPPORT

Teaching is hard. The support of colleagues is what makes teaching a little bit easier. At the end of a hard day, many teachers rely on conversations with colleagues and encouragement to keep going. Relating back to my beliefs, I am reminded of the many mentors in my life who have given me guidance as an educator and who took time out of their days to help me.

The collective mindset approach is what provides a supportive atmosphere for beginning teachers and their students to grow and learn. It is often that support comes in the form of encouragement when you're having a challenging day. Through the support of mentors, we can realize that trying a new lesson or strategy or reading the way students respond in their learning is far more important than having perfect execution. Having the support of colleagues and mentors can help us take instructional risks and be far more affective when we take care of ourselves as well.

### IMPACT

My hope for Student-Centered Mentoring is to have a broader impact on *all* students. It is evident that educators want to see students grow and succeed, but that takes time. In the same token, teachers' growth takes time. Some instructional practices are also more effective to use than others. This is where it is important to understand how students learn and how to develop students' independence as drivers of their own learning. Rather than asking, "What content should I teach?" we should be asking, "How can I prepare students to problem-solve when learning gets hard?" If we take this approach with beginning teachers, then maybe we can empower more educators and students to impact our world for the better.

### MIND FRAME

In order to support mentees and mentors, we have to believe in the mentoring partnerships' abilities to make substantial impact on students' learning. "How we think about the impact of what we do is

more important than what we do” (Hattie, 2018, ix). If we think we can help students learn, then we have the mindset that will make that possible. Rather, if we think a student is incapable, then it is likely that the student will not grow or learn like other students. Anyone who has worked with students and teachers knows that there are people in both groups who can seem closed off to learning new things. Whether uncertain or just reluctant, the common chord is often a discomfort with vulnerability and stepping outside of their comfort zone. Although it’s not easy to change, we must work with students and teachers to make progressive mindset shifts.

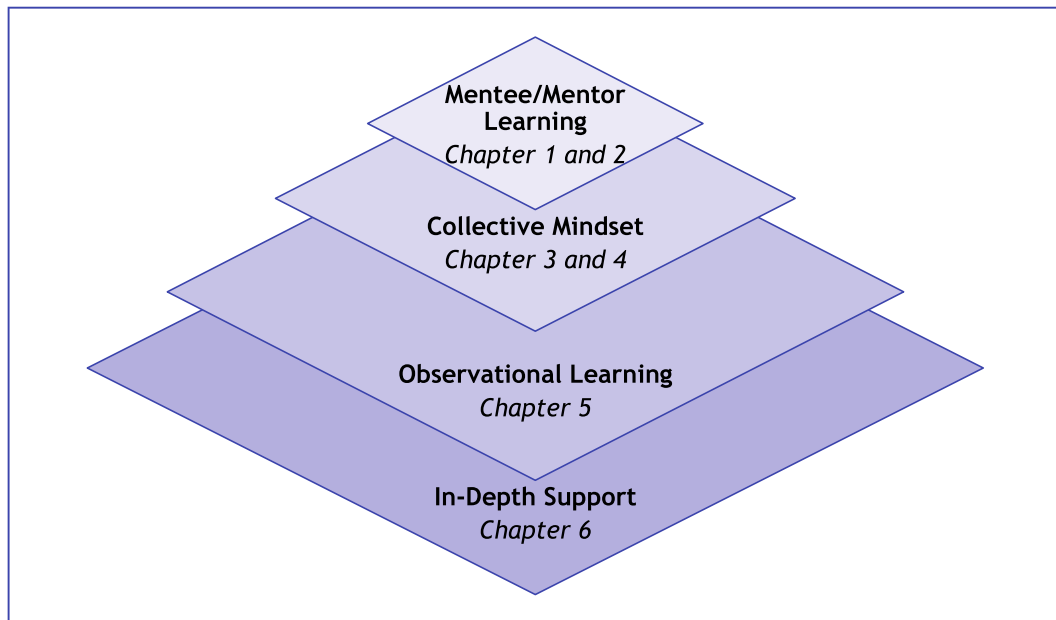
## GROWTH

It takes time to grow in our practice. It takes time to see the growth in students and their learning. Are there always going to be challenges to face? Yes, of course. Some will be big, and some will be small. Some will be simple, and some will be complex. Some will need anyone to help, and some will be about finding the *right* people to help. In the end, growth is possible. We have to learn to overcome challenges by accepting the changes, learning from them, and continuing to work toward impacting students. If we attempt to be innovators, we truly embody the vulnerability it takes to grow. “To develop students as ‘innovators’ in their pursuits, we must embody this as educators,” (Couros, 2014). Therefore, it is important to model for our students what it takes to learn new things. This is one of the primary purposes of *Student-Centered Mentoring*, to ultimately help new teachers and mentors and ultimately students to all become innovators.

## HOW TO APPROACH STUDENT-CENTERED MENTORING

The chapters in this book are organized by the layers of Student-Centered Mentoring (See Figure I.3). Each chapter provides strategies mentors can use to support their work with mentees and includes tips and action steps to assist in implementation. The “In The Classroom” strategies throughout the book can be used with mentors and mentees as well as with students. The power behind this useful tool adds another avenue to being student-centered! You can choose which chapter to read based on the layer or the specific strategies you may want to focus on. If you are new to the concept of Student-Centered Mentoring, I recommend starting with the first and second layer.

Figure 1.3 Organization of This Book



## FOCUS ON MENTEE/MENTOR LEARNING

**Chapter 1** uncovers the meaning of Student-Centered Mentoring and compares it to a traditional teacher-centered approach. This chapter not only guides mentors in how to incorporate Student-Centered Mentoring with their mentees but also leads an exploration of a student-centered environment in their own classrooms.

If you want to learn more about taking a student-centered approach with beginning teachers, read Chapter 1.

**Chapter 2** provides a foundation for professional learning, both for the new teacher and the mentor in beginning their partnership. A positive relationship is key to the Student-Centered Mentoring approach. Some of the knowledge consists of listening to the needs of new teachers and guiding mentees to listen to their students. Forming appropriate feedback is included here, as it is a large part of a mentor's role in an effective partnership.

If you want to boost your learning as a mentor and learn how to begin a successful mentor/mentee partnership, read Chapter 2.

## FOCUS ON COLLECTIVE MINDSET

**Chapter 3** goes into the efficacy shaping of both new teachers and their mentors, allowing for exploration of innovative learning mindsets in conjunction with brain-based learning. This chapter also takes a deep look at mind frames, as they are essential to a teacher's continual development and their ability to make an impact on students from the start of their career.

If you want to learn how to embrace a collective mindset with your mentee, read Chapter 3.

**Chapter 4** employs the heart of what it means to be a teacher today, through the collaborative partnership with colleagues. It also provides a structured format for collaborative reflection and goal-setting conversations, which is significant for a beginning teacher and mentor's relationship.

If you want to promote a continued partnership with new teachers, read Chapter 4.

## FOCUS ON OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

**Chapter 5** builds the repertoire of experiences for both the beginning teacher and the mentor by providing clarity of instructional practices with ideas for observation. This chapter explains how the mentor and teacher duo promotes empowerment and provides accountability within observational learning.

If you want ideas for on-the-spot experiences to support instructional practices and observations, read Chapter 5.

## FOCUS ON IN-DEPTH SUPPORT

**Chapter 6** focuses on how to structure Mentor Coaching Cycles using the Student-Centered Coaching model. This chapter discusses the powerful benefits of developing a mentor and mentee's collective efficacy through a joint coaching cycle and practicing on-the-spot learning with a focus on students.

If you want information about coaching support for your mentee/mentor partnership, read Chapter 6.



