Understanding the stages of a mentoring relationship can help mentors reflect on and employ the mentoring behaviors that can help the relationship mature and evolve to the next stage. Such understanding can also help mentors reflect on the current state of their relationship in terms of whether it is stagnating or accelerating.

One of the goals of the Ohio Resident Educator Program is that mentoring relationships reach the **Collaboration Stage** where the Instructional Mentor and Resident Educator are fully engaged in deep conversations about the teaching and learning process and the work that both do in the service of their students. Such conversations are built on the trusting relationships that emerge from the successful navigation of the **Initiation** and **Exploration** stages of the relationship.

The purpose of the following slides are to provide a description of each stage as well as identify some of the **Promising Practices and Potential Pitfalls** associated with each stage.
Initiation
Introducing & Orienting

Mentor and RE meet and form initial impressions. The mentor offers, or the RE requests, assistance in preparing for the early days of the school year. Dialogue and problem solving is often focused on technical and logistical issues including finding resources or clarifying policies and procedures.

Promising Practices

1. Reaching out as early as possible, including the summer if possible.
2. Asking the RE if they have any questions or needs as they prepare for the first days of school. Specifically asking them if they have questions about the Resident Educator Program.
3. If needs or questions are shared, taking the steps to meet those needs and answer those questions.
4. Providing the RE with an orientation to the school, district and community.
5. Engaging the RE in a conversation about your hopes for the relationship making clear that you are not your job to evaluate their performance, but rather to help them become a successful teacher and valued member of the school community.
6. Looking for opportunities to introduce the RE to other members of the school community.
7. Finding your way of sincerely expressing your intention to be a helpful force. In the life of your RE.
8. Negotiating an agreement as to when and where you will meet.

Potential Pitfalls

1. Failing to be proactive in initiating the relationship.
2. Sending verbal or nonverbal messages that suggest you are burdened by the responsibility of mentoring.
3. Expressing negative opinions about others in the school community.
4. Neglecting to follow through on promises of help.
5. Communicating thoughts that serve to diminish the RE’s anticipation and enthusiasm.
Exploration
Self-disclosing and Accepting

Mentor and RE begin the process of self-disclosure as they conference about the needs, interests and goals of the RE. Early impressions are reinforced or revised as each person moves toward or away from accepting the other. Formal and informal agreements are openly or covertly negotiated that will guide the future of the relationship.

**Promising Practices**

1. Monitoring your thoughts about the RE being careful not to make early judgments that might derail the relationship.
2. Staying in touch! Keeping the lines of communication open.
3. Looking for opportunities for shared experience with the RE.
4. Listening carefully as the RE shares his or her viewpoints on professional topics.
5. Sharing your personal viewpoints on professional topics when appropriate.
6. Modeling your personal commitment to professional growth.
7. Being a co-learner with the RE.
8. Using the Resident Educator Program tools as vehicles to promote meaningful conversations about professional practice.
9. Monitoring the level of commitment of your RE to the relationship and the RE Program.
10. Modeling fallibility as a teacher by sharing things that did not work in your own classroom and how you respond to such events.

**Potential Pitfalls**

1. Lowering your commitment to the relationship when encountering resistance or lack of openness from the RE.
2. Breaking confidentiality by inappropriately sharing information about the RE with others.
3. Failing to accept the RE as a new and developing professional.
4. Waiting for the RE to initiate contact with you.
5. Failing to stay on track with the use of the RE Program tools.
6. Not being fully present when meeting with the RE.
7. Negotiating a spoken or unspoken agreement with the RE to treat the RE program as a compliance challenge and not a mutual growth opportunity.
Promising Practices

1. Being trustworthy with new information you have acquired about the RE.
2. Conducting formal observations with a sincere interest in the RE’s ongoing development, especially with regard to their expressed concerns.
3. Adjusting mentoring behaviors and communications to meet the needs of the RE.
4. Interacting with the RE in ways that make clear you view them as a fellow professional and valued colleague.
5. Acknowledging the complexity of teaching in your personal reflections and conversations.
6. Maintaining a focus on professional practice and the development of new knowledge and skill.
7. Sharing instructional ideas and resources with the RE and looking for opportunities to use the RE’s ideas and resources in your own teaching.

Potential Pitfalls

1. Disengaging from the relationship because you feel the RE is doing well.
2. Disengaging from the relationship because you feel the RE is resisting your collaborative efforts.
3. Failing to reflect on your mentoring behaviors with regard to their impact on the RE’s state of mind.
4. Allowing competing demands (yours and the REs) to interfere with regular meetings with the RE.
How a mentoring relationship matures over time is highly personal to the two individuals involved. Here are some thoughts perhaps worth considering.

1. **Friendship is not prerequisite to mentoring.** In other words, Instructional Mentors do not need to feel a burden to be the RE’s friend. However, it is difficult to imagine a mentoring relationship being successful if the mentor is not *friendly* in his or her behaviors. IF true *friendship* emerges it is a *gift* to be cherished and nurtured.

2. **Some mentoring relationships transcend time and space and evolve into new and different relationships while others, though appreciated and valued, gradually fade away with little or no on-going contact.**

3. **The handshake graphic should suggest that whether there is Consolidation or Cessation it applies in both situations.** In Consolidation it is a gesture that says this will continue. In Cessation, it hopefully is a gesture that says “thank you for all you have done” and “I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.”

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### Consolidation or Cessation

*Committing or Departing*

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<tr>
<th>Consolidation</th>
<th>Cessation</th>
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<td>Mentor and RE enjoy one another on a personal and professional level developing a strong and enduring sense of positive regard and mutual respect. The relationship merges into one of genuine collegiality and consolidated purpose that can transcend physical separation. Lifelong associations can result.</td>
<td>Mentor and RE formally or informally bring closure to the relationship. Communications become increasingly infrequent for a variety of reasons including physical separation or program termination. One or both parties may retain positive memories of the relationship despite the decision of one or both people to move forward without the other.</td>
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