

The Roots of Empathy Instructor/Mentor Relationship

The Role of the Roots of Empathy Mentor

The Roots of Empathy Mentor provides program support and professional development to Roots of Empathy Instructors in their first and subsequent years of program delivery. Mentoring helps maintain program integrity and high quality consistent curriculum implementation, according to Roots of Empathy philosophy and principles.

Mentoring with Empathy

We all perform best in situations of trust and understanding. The Mentor's willingness to listen to the Instructor's point of view and understand his/her feelings on an issue opens the door to authentic communication. Just as we learn from children in the Roots of Empathy classroom, the Mentor will learn from the Instructor and the Instructor will learn from the Mentor. "To teach is to learn and to learn is to teach."- Mary Gordon

Mentor as Coach: Working Together

Building relationships is the foundation of the Roots of Empathy program in classrooms, communities, and the Mentor/Instructor relationship. The Mentor's role is to encourage and coach the best performance possible, and guide the delivery of programs while building the skill development, self-awareness and confidence of the Instructor. Though this role is related to the Instructor's certification, this process is a collaboration and partnership between Mentor and Instructor with the overall goal being excellence of instruction for children.

Mentor Classroom Visits

Each new Instructor receives a classroom observation by the Roots of Empathy Mentor following the delivery of Theme 1. To prepare for this visit, the Instructor will complete the Instructor Self Reflection Questionnaire, and following the classroom visit she/he will meet with the Mentor for review, feedback, and to complete the Instructor Growth Plan. This process is based on respect, honesty and open communication and is intended to offer new Instructors support, feedback, and the opportunity to discuss challenges and solutions, in their first year of delivering the Roots of Empathy program.

Mentoring through Questions

Problem solving is more successful when it starts from the perspective of the Instructor. Simply asking questions such as, "How do you think that went?" and "Which aims do you think were reached in the lesson?" often opens an avalanche of conversation. Once trust is established, the Instructor feels comfortable asking the Mentor for suggestions and this is an appropriate use of the Mentor's expertise.

Investing in the Instructor - Growth Plan

In Roots of Empathy, we carefully select potential Instructors for trainings to ensure they have relevant experience and appropriate motivation. Training and mentoring are designed to fill in the gaps of experience and build skills and understanding with a goal of excellent instruction for children and optimal development for Instructors.

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Program Integrity and Best Practice

Mentors support and maintain program integrity, and best practice according to Roots of Empathy philosophy, principles and values. If an Instructor's delivery of the Roots of Empathy program is weak, fails to improve and the Instructor is not responsive to a Mentor's coaching, the Senior Mentor becomes involved. The Mentor's role is vital in the Roots of Empathy family as he/she is front-line in the quality assurance of our curriculum and instruction.

Mentors as Partners

The Roots of Empathy Mentor's experience brings a perspective and understanding of the challenges and tough spots of delivering the Roots of Empathy program in a classroom, and she/he is prepared to be supportive and encouraging as the Instructor gains knowledge and experience delivering the program. The Roots of Empathy way is to support all team members to ensure their growth and confidence in teaching the Roots of Empathy program.