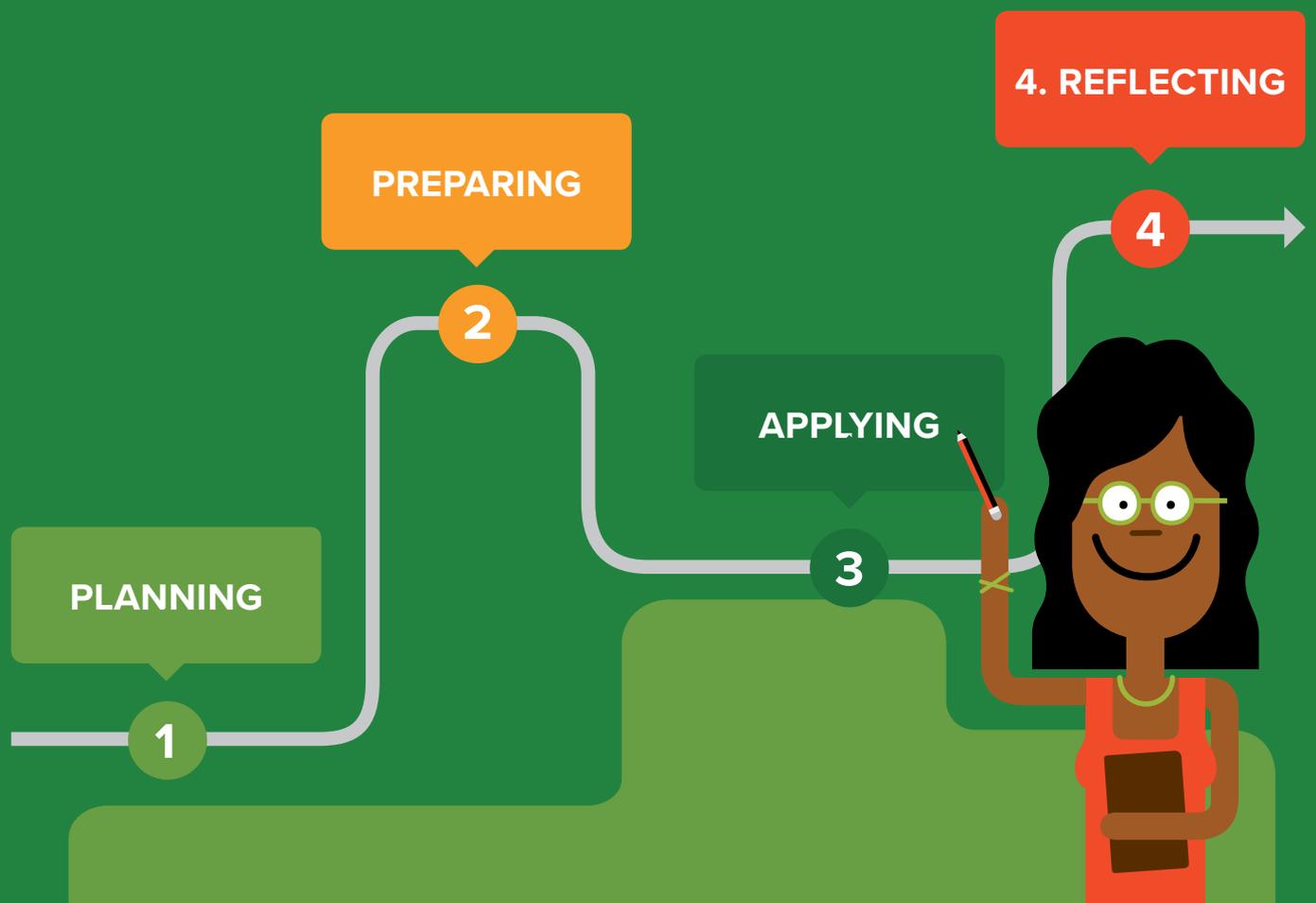
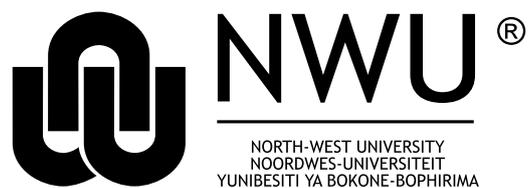


# A PATHWAY TO MENTORING



VVOB COMMISSIONED NWU TO DEVELOP THIS MATERIAL  
IN COLLABORATION WITH DBE AND VVOB



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# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PATHWAY	4
2.1. The Planning Step	5
2.2. The Preparing Step	10
2.3. The Applying Step	10
2.4. The Reflecting Step	10

# FOREWORD

*A PATHWAY TO MENTORING IS INTENDED TO ASSIST THE PROVINCIAL STEERING COMMITTEES, THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AS WELL AS VARIOUS OFFICIALS THAT WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMME TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE MENTORING SYSTEM FOR THE BEGINNING TEACHER.*

The mentoring of beginning teachers is a critical component of the induction of new teachers into the profession. It makes necessary connections between theory and practice, supports the professional and personal growth of beginning teachers and provides professional development opportunities for the mentor teacher.

This quick-reference guide provides a practical resource for the establishment and implementation of a mentoring system for beginning teachers as well as a resource for sustaining the mentoring system.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

*GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW SCHOOL AND IT STRUCTURES, LEARNING ABOUT THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENTS, PLANNING UNITS OF LESSONS, ENGAGING LEARNERS, USING A VARIETY OF TEACHING STRATEGIES, DEALING WITH CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE, ASSISTING STUDENTS WHO HAVE SPECIFIC NEEDS, COORDINATING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND BEING ACCOUNTABLE TO THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS OF EDUCATION ARE JUST A FEW OF THE JOBS TEACHERS DO.*

Many of these duties are difficult for the most experienced professional, so one wonders how beginning teachers survive, since they are expected, on their very first day of employment, to do the job of a seasoned veteran.

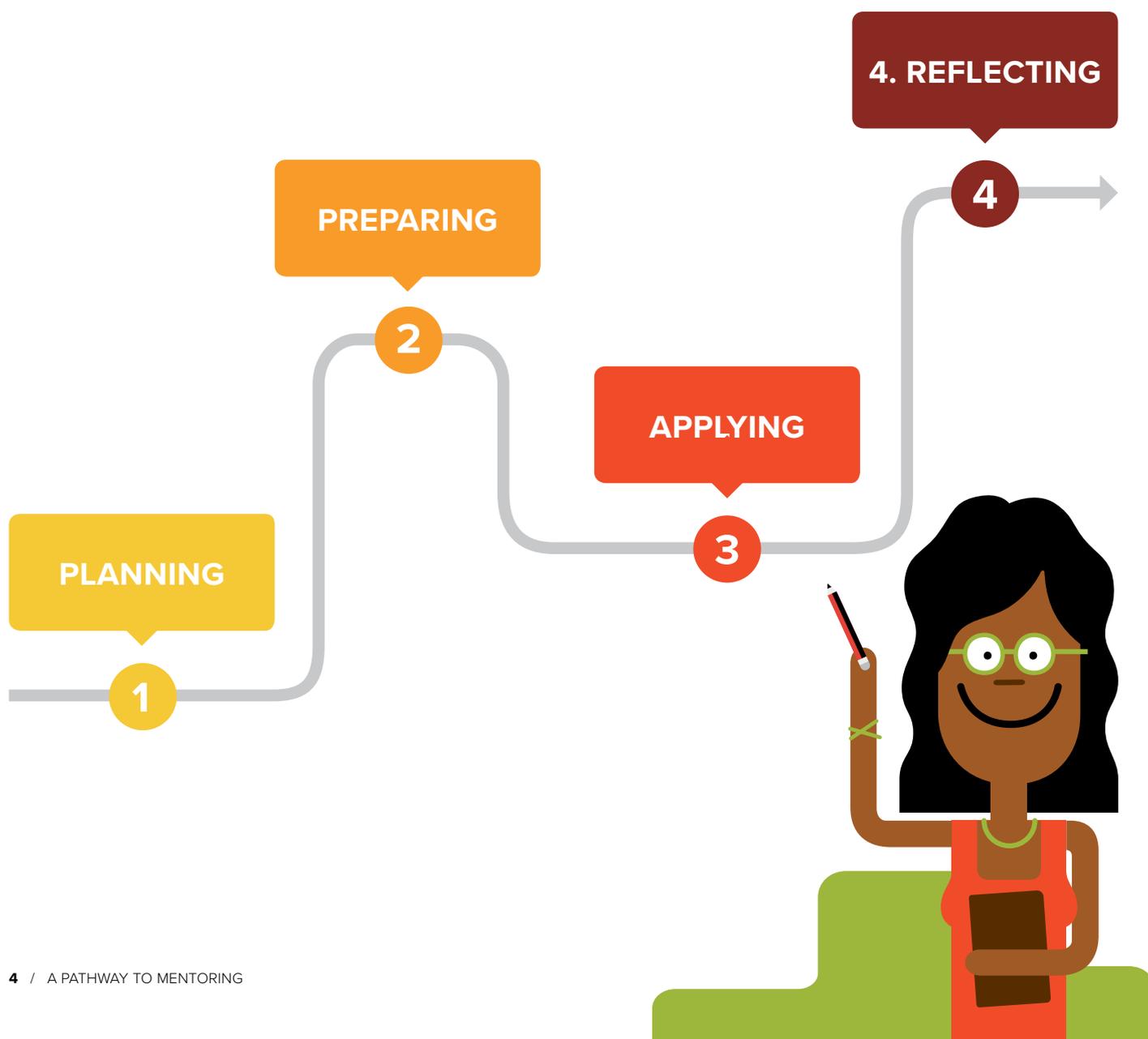
Mentoring is a nurturing process, in which a more skilled person serves as a role model, coaches, encourages, counsels, guides and supports a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher.



## 2. BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PATHWAY

THE PURPOSE OF THE BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PATHWAY (CF. FIGURE 1) IS TO ENSURE THAT THE TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMME AND THE INDUCTION PROCESS UNFOLD IN A COORDINATED AND COHERENT MANNER TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION. THE STEPS ALONG THE PATHWAY ARE MEANT TO BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE TO A DISTRICT'S CONTEXT AND SPECIFIC NEEDS.

**FIGURE 1:** BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PATHWAY



## 2.1. THE PLANNING STEP

During the planning step, the following aspects should be taken note of and/or clarified:

- Role and responsibilities of the role-players
- Planning readiness
- The vision of the district
- Selecting and matching mentors and beginning teachers

### 2.1.1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROLE-PLAYERS

#### THE PROVINCIAL STEERING COMMITTEE

(e.g., Director, provincial and district officials, SACE, VVOB, etc.)

- Overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Teacher Induction Programme.
- Discussing and taking action, if required, on reports by circuit managers.

#### DISTRICT OFFICE

##### CIRCUIT MANAGER

- Determine whether the district is ready to implement the Teacher Induction Programme.
- Communicate the vision of the Teacher Induction Programme to all principals.
- Provide support to principals and school management teams.
- Encourage school to create an environment that will give the Teacher Induction Programme every chance of success.
- Report on the progress of the Induction Programme and the mentoring system at provincial steering committee meetings.

#### SUBJECT ADVISORS/CURRICULUM ADVISORS

- Co-ordinate and conduct the training of the mentor teachers.
- Provide support to the mentor teachers and beginning teachers during the teacher Induction Programme.
- Request that mentor teachers and beginning teachers be provided with dedicated time to take part in induction activities.
- Identify and eliminate barriers to the successful implementation of the programme.

#### SCHOOL

##### PRINCIPAL

- Identify mentor teachers to participate in and undergo training for the Teacher Induction Programme.
- Respects the confidential relationship of the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher.

##### SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Provide peer support to mentor teacher and beginning teacher.
- Look at the workload of the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher.
- Facilitate the use of time and resources for the mentoring process.
- Monitor the Teacher Induction Programme activities in the school between the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher.

##### MENTOR TEACHER

- Continue to teach while serving as mentor teacher.
- Orientate the beginning teachers to the school at the beginning of the year. New teachers are introduced to the school ethos, structures, policies, procedures and practices, and are given information about facilities, resources, activities and routines. They should also be given an overview of their responsibilities and the expectations for the first few weeks.

- Understand the typical needs and challenges of the beginning teacher.
- Develop and use a variety of strategies to assist the beginning teacher.
- Prepare themselves for effective one-on-one consultation with individual teachers.
- Initially focus their efforts in areas known to be difficult for beginning teachers.
- Make the accumulated wisdom of other experienced teachers accessible to beginning teachers.
- Develop strategies for giving acceptance and support for the beginning teacher within the school context.
- Model effective practice.
- Observe and provide feedback to the beginning teacher in the classroom.
- Offer support in the form of advice and guidance related to personal, social and professional spheres.
- Identify the professional development needs of the beginning teacher.

- Maintain a relationship with the beginning teacher consistent with SACE Code of Professional Conduct.
- Act as a link between the beginning teacher and the school management team.

**BEGINNING TEACHER**

- Participate in the Teacher Induction Programme.
- Be open to observations and feedback offered by the mentor and other professionals and experts.
- Participate in professional development activities identified during the Teacher Induction Programme.
- Be prepared to engage in a self-reflective teaching practice.
- Are committed to an ethos of collegial reflective practice.
- Keep a Professional Development Portfolio that documents their learning.

**2.1.2 PLANNING READINESS**

The following checklists can be used by the district office as well as the participating schools to determine their readiness for the Teacher Induction Programme.

**CHECKLIST 2: SCHOOL READINESS**

TASKS	COMPLETED	NOT-COMPLETED	ACTION STEPS TO ENSURE COMPLETION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION STEP
Used criteria to identify appropriate mentor teachers				
Communicated names of mentor teachers and beginning teachers to circuit manager				
Principal and SMT familiar with their roles and responsibilities				
Mentor teacher and beginning teacher support structures and resources in place				

## CHECKLIST 2: DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT OFFICE READINESS

TASKS	COMPLETED	NOT-COMPLETED	ACTION STEPS TO ENSURE COMPLETION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION STEP
List of mentor teachers and beginning teacher names received from schools				
Mentor training materials prepared				
Principal and School Management Team support for Induction in place:What support will be provided? How will support be provided (i.e., via email, face-to-face, via technology, etc.)? By whom will support be provided?				
Who will monitor that the Teacher Induction Programme is on schedule at the schools?				
How will the monitoring of the programme be done (e.g., via Whatsapp, Skype, etc.)?				

### 2.1.3 DISTRICT VISION FOR INDUCTION

Once the district is ready for implementation, the next task will be to reflect on and create a vision for what should be accomplished through the induction process. Table 1 can be used to guide reflection on a vision for the district. Having a clearly defined vision can serve as a starting point for discussion during the mentor training sessions.

**TABLE 1: DISTRICT VISION FOR INDUCTION**

<p><b>WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO YOUR DISTRICT AND THE TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE INDUCTION PROCESS?</b></p>
<p><b>HOW CAN YOU BUILD ON YOUR STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND EXISTING RESOURCES TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION?</b></p>
<p><b>SUMMARISE YOUR VISION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMME IN YOUR DAISTRICT IN ONE PARAGRAPH</b></p>

## **2.1.4 SELECTING AND MATCHING MENTOR TEACHERS AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

In this section guidelines/criteria for selecting mentor teachers as well as consideration for matching mentor teachers and beginning teachers are presented.

### **2.1.4.1 GUIDELINES/CRITERIA FOR SELECTING MENTOR TEACHERS**

Figure 2 presents an overview of the guidelines or criteria that principals and/or school management teams can use to select mentor teachers.

**MINIMUM OF THREE YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**ABILITY TO USE LEARNER DATA, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, TO DESIGN AND ADAPT INSTRUCTION**

**ABILITY TO USE MODEL AND EXPLAIN EVIDENCE-BASED PRINCIPLES AND METHODS IN THE RELEVANT CONTENT AREAS**

**ABILITY TO APPLY THEORY TO PRACTICE**

**COMMITMENT AND ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS**

**COMMITMENT TO SELF-REFLECTION AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH**

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS INCLUDING COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

**ABILITY TO PROVIDE BALANCED, NON-JUDGEMENTAL, AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK TO BEGINNING TEACHERS**



### 2.1.4.2 MATCHING MENTOR TEACHERS AND BEGINNING TEACHERS

There are no set numbers of mentors and beginning teachers that can participate in the induction process. This section provides some guidelines for the **Principal and/or School Management Team** to consider and which can also assist district officials in terms of how and why certain individuals were selected to function as mentor teachers.

Although both large teams and small teams have their benefits, the number of participants you select should ultimately be based on the number of strong mentor-beginning teacher matches that you have and believe you can support. Just as having the proper conditions in place is critical for the success of the induction process, having the right participants in the right roles can affect whether or not the induction process works.



ONE MENTOR AND  
ONE BEGINNING TEACHER



ONE MENTOR AND  
TWO BEGINNING TEACHERS



TWO MENTORS AND  
THREE BEGINNING  
TEACHERS

As important as understanding which experienced teachers will make good mentors is identifying which mentor will be the best match for each beginning teacher. The most successful matches are those in which the mentor and beginning teacher teach similar content areas and grade levels, share similar involvement or interest in evidence-based instruction, are available to meet at similar times and locations, and have complementary needs and strengths.

## 2.2 THE PREPARING STEP

During this step, the mentor teacher will assist with the orientation of the beginning teacher at school. In addition, the District and Circuit Office (e.g., subject advisors, curriculum advisors or individuals identified by the district office) will undertake the training of the mentor teachers at the identified schools. An outline of core aspects that will be included during the training include:

- Establishing a mentoring relationship
- Classroom observation
- Reflective practice
- Actionable feedback

(cf. 'A guide to training mentors')

## 2.3 THE APPLYING STEP

During this step the mentor teacher and beginning teacher(s) begin the Beginning Teacher Induction Programme. The role-players during this step are primarily the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher. The role of the subject/curriculum advisors is to provide any support or remove barriers that the mentor teachers or beginning teachers may have; this takes place via the principal and school management team. The district office should communicate the timeframe of the Induction Programme.

## 2.4 THE REFLECTING STEP

The final step along the Beginning Teacher Induction Pathway is the time for final reflection about the changes that have occurred as a result of induction and about the next steps going forward. It involves the provincial steering committee conferring with the district/circuit office about what has been achieved and what new needs have emerged.

This step is also the point where the beginning teacher shares their learning with others in a professional learning community within the school. Having to synthesise, summarise, and articulate what's been learned and how those new ideas have been put into practice is an important part of the learning process. It is an opportunity for the beginning teacher to describe their thinking and hear others discuss their own ideas, bringing them into a community of professional learning that will continue beyond induction.

By taking the time to reflect on the new knowledge and skills attained and being purposeful about how the knowledge and skills are shared, it is possible to increase the likelihood of sustaining the use of the knowledge and skills beyond the induction process. Purposefully sharing learning with others scales-up what was learned so that it becomes part of the instructional toolkit of all participants in the Beginning Teacher Induction Programme.

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**WE WISH YOU  
WELL ON THIS  
EXCITING JOURNEY!**

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