Modern Mentoring: Vignette

Andy is a Generation Y teacher who has just taken a job in a local school district. During his interview, he was particularly disturbed by one of the questions posed: “How long do you expect to remain a teacher at this school?” He explained that he chose teaching as a career for life, and hoped that his skills and the fit in this particular school would enable him to be a lifelong teacher there. He then proceeded to ask why the question was posed, wondering if there was a high teacher turnover. The interviewer explained that of all Generation Y teachers they had hired in the last five years, approximately 75 percent left within three years. The turnover was becoming a huge problem for the school as it was creating instability among the staff, students, and parents. The principal, in particular, was worried about how this was affecting morale in the school and the school culture, never mind the intense cost and time for hiring every year.

After Andy started his job, he approached the principal again about this constant issue of turnover. He suggested that they meet to establish what might be working or not working for these new teachers. During the course of the year, Andy and the principal established, among other things, a more modern mentoring program, some professional development opportunity choices for newer teachers, and some guidelines for acceptable technological use within the school. Andy explained that as a Generation Y teacher, he expected all these things to be established in his new position. He was glad to help the principal start to evaluate some of the criteria by which Generation Y teachers may be judging the school or district, and to think about changes that would help integrate new teachers to the school.


Mentors and Generation “Y”

1. What characteristics of Generation Y have you seen in beginning teachers?

2. Can you identify and explain any differences in relationship building among Generation Y teachers and that of other generations?

3. What would a modern mentoring program look like in your school and our district?

4. How could you contribute?

5. What professional development could you offer beginning teachers in your school or our district?
6. Does our school district have a written technology plan for teachers with guidelines for acceptable technological use? Please share this with your beginning teacher(s).