Mentoring New Special Education Teachers: A Guide for Mentors and Program Developers


While new special education teachers have many of the same needs and challenges of any new teacher, there are also some unique concerns. Authors Duffy and Forgan address both common and specialized areas in Mentoring for New Special Education Teachers. For example, the chapter on “Supports for Special Education Teachers” would be especially useful for new principals who might be relatively inexperienced with the complexities of a special education teacher’s job.

Here the authors address “the multiplicity of roles often overwhelming to a new special education teacher who enters the field thinking she will teach in a self-contained setting.” They suggest that “if the new special education teacher is not skilled at multitasking, then the novice will need help in prioritizing the day.” Special education processes, such as the development of individual education plans, are also discussed.

Another brief chapter that would be useful to mentors paired with either regular or special education teachers talks about working with adult learners. Duffy and Forgan build on Jane Vella’s 12 principles for effective adult learning to demonstrate ways in which mentors can effectively create a teaching-learning relationship.