



New JEA mentors develop, hone mentoring skills, techniques

by Linda Barrington

2017 mentor cadre: Candace Brandt (North Carolina), Kim Messadieh (California), Mary Patrick (Kansas), Jane Blystone (Pennsylvania), Susan Newell (Alabama), Julie Mancini (Florida)

Photo by Kelly Glasscock

Learning to mentor a new journalism teacher takes time and practice, even after a successful career helping young people learn how to be ‘journalists.’ Nick Ferentinos, one of the Mentor Program founders, once said about the process of training new mentors.

“A veteran media educator brings vast resources and experiences to mentoring, but adults learn differently than children do and require fresh approaches and strategies,” Ferentinos said.

The approaches and strategies for mentor training were carefully developed by the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California. Through an agreement with the Center, the JEA Mentor Program uses and adapts NTC instructional materials for journalism-specific mentor training.

Three days of training at the Advisers’ Institute each year has experienced jour-

nalism teachers focusing on new skills for their new job of mentoring. Role-playing, problem-solving, and analysis of communication strategies are all part of the hands-on, interactive training.

“Sitting in a circle and sharing stories and swapping what works and things that didn’t as well as learning through hands-on activities is what really makes this mentor training work,” said Tennessee mentor Joy McCaleb, who trained a year ago. “Having instructors who genuinely cared about my success as a mentor and being there to answer questions and offer advice and guidance was priceless.”

Mentors-in-training learn about mentor roles and language, tailoring support, selecting strategies, giving constructive feedback and much more.

This past summer they reflected and discussed and questioned instructors Bill

Flechtner and Linda Barrington to discover every tactic possible to help new advisers and motivate them to develop strong journalism programs.

“The collaboration with live partners is critically important to the success of the program,” Jane Blystone said. “We were able to discuss with peers and mentor trainers the issues that we can avoid or that may come up in a mentee situation.” Blystone is a Pennsylvania mentor.

One of the activities gives mentors a chance to role-play mentor-mentee scenarios. Problem-solving potential crises gives mentors-in-training a chance to brainstorm possible responses.

“Onsite training allowed us to meet and connect with the other mentor trainees,” Nebraska mentor Bob Bair said. “While I knew some of the individuals, I had not met a majority of them and getting to know them personally was beneficial for me. The face-to-face interaction was stimulating and helpful.”

Before attending the mentor training,

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“Mentors build a trusting relationship with the advisers they mentor. The goal of the Mentor Program is to develop mentees into autonomous instructors. Mentors do this by being facilitative and collaborative with the advisers they assist. These are skills they learn and practice at training.”

~Bill Flechtner, JEA Mentor Program Chair

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new mentors are provided with Mentor program documents detailing the operation of the program as well as mentor responsibilities, e.g., attending a mentor forum each year, handling the principal-mentor-mentee contract, writing twice yearly reports, getting their mentees' profiles turned in, and more.

Mentors receive an interactive quiz to help them review this information at home. An opportunity to ask questions during training then allows the instructors to clarify details and emphasize important information. Additionally, sharing their questions with the other trainees provided an opportunity to clarify information that people might not have been sure about.

Mentor Mary Patrick from Kansas reflected on the activities, saying how important the practice, situation solving and interaction among the experienced new mentors was. “I feel the practice really sealed our training,” she said.

“I think I was highly motivated by the other mentors-in-training as we searched our own journalism pasts and discussed impromptu issues journalism advisers face today,” McCaleb said.

Mentor Julie Mancini from Florida said, “The face-to-face role-playing and discussion that took place during our training was invaluable to me.” The emphasis on collaboration and role-playing is an essential component of the training.

Mentors are well prepared for their work and feedback from mentees in their exit surveys is overwhelmingly positive.

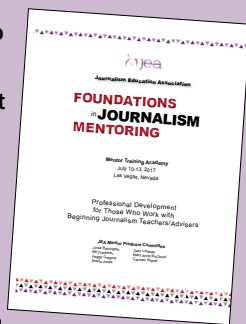
“Bill [Flechtner] has been advocate for my success as a journalism teacher and media adviser,” mentee Jennifer Young said. “He’s helped me carefully examine small and more pressing issues to develop the best strategies for achieving success. he has done so much for me to support my independence in the field!”



Jane Blystone and Kim Messadieh role-play a mentor-mentee conversation. This activity provides an opportunity for new mentors to practice the skills and behaviors of mentoring language. This activity is formatted so that the context for the conversation is as authentic as possible and applicable to the role of the mentor. The collaborative focus of training scenarios can only happen successfully during live, on-site training sessions. Photo by Linda Barrington

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS OF MENTOR TRAINING

- Learning to observe, coach and give constructive feedback to peers, including strategies for self-reflection
- Utilizing best instructional practices, classroom management and organization
- Dealing with difficult or resistant people and conflict resolution
- Enhancing communication skills and building relationships
- Clarifying mentor's roles and responsibilities
- Finding mentees and getting them to commit to the program



2017 MENTOR CADRE: KNOWLEDGEABLE, ACCOMPLISHED

JANE BLYSTONE, MJE, PH.D.

has advised student publications for 34 years including yearbook, newspaper and literary magazines. She is a past JEA Region and State Director and chaired the Scholarship committee. Currently, she is on the Scholastic Press Rights Committee and Certification Committee. Blystone served as local chair for the Philadelphia Convention. In addition, she was a member of the JEA Awards committee, has judged, moderated, and written prompts for JEA Write-offs and authored pieces for C:JET. Blystone has received the JEA Medal of Merit and JEA Special Recognition Yearbook Adviser, NSPA Pioneer Award, CSPA Gold Key and the CSPA James F. Paschal awards. She served as the president of the Pennsylvania School Press Association for five terms and moderates the PSPA northwest regional Student Journalism Competition.



CANDACE BRANDT

advised the award-winning Providence Senior High student newspaper, The Prowl, for 14 years, also later guiding the staff in the creation of the online student news site of the same name. Under her leadership the staff earned several writing and editorial leadership awards from the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association. Her students also twice won scholarships from The Daily Tar Heel at the NCSMA Summer Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill. Brandt served as president of the NC-SMA Adviser's Association for 2015-16.



Before beginning her teaching career, Brandt worked in public relations at the college level and in public service at the CBS (now FOX) affiliate KTBC-TV in Austin, Texas.

JULIE MANCINI, CJE,

recently retired after teaching for 22 years at her alma mater, Dunnellon High School, where she taught English and advised yearbook and newspaper. Her students have won multiple All-Florida awards in the Florida Scholastic Press Association contests. She was the FSPA District 2 director and on the local committee for the JEA/NSPA Orlando convention. She freelances for the Riverland News where she recently earned first place from the Florida Press Association in Sports Photography.



KIMBERLY MESSADIEH, CJE,

is currently the president of Los Angeles Journalism Teachers Association, Vice-President of Southern California JEA. She taught print and broadcast journalism at El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills, California, for 17 years as well as beginning and documentary film. She has served as broadcast contest coordinator for three national conventions, and on the planning committee of three others. Prior to teaching, she worked in every field of journalism but online.



SUSAN NEWELL, MJE, NBCT,

has advised award-winning scholastic newspapers and yearbooks, having taught both middle and high school. She is Alabama's JEA Director, has served as a Southern Interscholastic Press Association board member and as Alabama Scholastic Press Association president. She is an Alabama Adviser of the Year, a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Special Recognition Adviser and Distinguished Adviser, and an ASNE Reynolds HSJ Institute fellow. She is a JEA mentor and welcomes new Alabama advisers to become mentees.



MARY PATRICK, CJE,

is a retired teacher who spent 43 years in the classroom with 29 of those in journalism. She advised the Eagle/Stamper yearbook. The book received numerous Gold and Silver crowns from CSPA, Pacemakers from NSPA, convention Best in Shows, and 15 All-Kansas Awards. Patrick is a recipient of the NSPA Pioneer Award and the JEA Lifetime Achievement Award. She served as chairperson for the JEA Middle School Commission and Middle School Liaison for the Kansas Scholastic Press Association. An award named for her is given to one outstanding middle school journalist in Kansas each year. Patrick judges for two national and several state organizations and teaches at a number of workshops every year for both advisers and their staffs.



SUPPORT

Mentees on SPA boards

Former mentees now serve on the very same scholastic press association boards that sponsored and supported the Mentor Program when they were mentees. Ohio has six of them: vice-president Julieanne McClain; regional directors Maggie Cogar (also the JEA state director for Ohio), Josh Davis, Amanda Leahy, Kari Phillips and Rebecca Yzenski, as well as mentor Wayne Dunn.

The board of the Kettle Moraine Press Association also has six former mentees: Beth Marshall, Danielle Olejniczak, Aaron Ramponi, Rachel Rauch (also JEA state director for Wisconsin), Cindy Renaud and Lindsay Skatrud, as well as mentors Linda Barrington and Sandy Jacoby.



Cindy Renaud

Mentors encourage mentees to participate

The Wyoming High School Student Press Association's J-Day each fall is a big event and mentor Katherine Patrick recruited the speakers and proctored two of the writing contests. WHSSPA is fully supportive of the Mentor Program.

"We give mentees free registration (\$40) to our state convention during the two-year period of their 'menteeship,'" Patrick said.

Arizona mentor Carmen Wendt said she encourages her mentees to attend the Arizona Interscholastic Press Association Fall Convention, Spring Reception and Summer Workshop. By attending these events they get to know other advisers and are more comfortable asking questions and exchanging ideas.

"I encourage my mentees to apply to give a session at the conventions," Wendt said. "Once they are accepted, I tell them to brag to their principal that they have been asked to speak at the state (or national) convention. Being a speaker lends importance to going and taking students to the event. One of my former mentees, Laura Hardy, is speaking this year at the event."

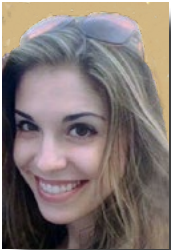


Katherine Patrick



Former mentees from Ohio attend the state convention in 2015. Front row: Rebekah Yzenski and Amanda Leahy. Back row: Julianne McClain, CJE; Josh Davis, CJE; Maggie Cogar, MJE. Wayne Dunn were their mentors. Cogar, Davis, Leahy and McClain each presented sessions. Cogar was also in charge of the Day-of contests.

Photo provided by Candace Bowen



“My mentee, Alana Van Der Shuys has been selected as the Secretary of the Garden State Scholastic Press Association. She attends conferences and presented at Press Day at Rutgers University.”

~Ron Bonadonna, JEA mentor in New Jersey

State-level associations vital to mentoring

by Linda Barrington

Darren is the new newspaper adviser at a rural high school in the Midwest. He is not new to the classroom, however, having taught graphic design for several years. Because of that background, he was the obvious choice at his school to take on the challenge of producing a newspaper after the last adviser left the school.

Darren is well-organized, practices good classroom management and knows the technology, his mentor says. That's where Darren gets most of his support. She brought him to their Fall Conference where he got lots of ideas and met other advisers who could also answer his questions and bounce ideas off. Then he had an arsenal of help for the rest of his advising career.

Darren isn't real, but his situation surely is, like that of many new journalism teachers who face tremendous challenges, but are able to succeed, in part, because of a good relationship with their mentors and a connection to their scholastic press association (SPA.)

JEA mentors have learned that success happens more effectively when the Mentor Program in each state has support from and a good relationship with local and regional SPAs. That starts with a big financial commitment on the SPAs' part because they provide all or part of the yearly stipends for their mentors.

The SPAs, however, do even more than just secure stipends for their mentors. They are partners and collaborators with

the Mentor Program in a number of ways. When states want to join the Mentor Program, it is the SPA president or executive director who signs the Memorandum of Understanding with JEA. It is the SPAs who select or approve teachers who will be their state's mentors.

When people approach the Mentor Committee, asking to become mentors, the committee chair, Bill Flechtner, refers them to the state SPAs, who then decide if they need and can afford one or more mentors. If so, the SPA will then vet that volunteer.

SPAs decide on the amount of their mentors' stipends, based on their financial ability, the distance the mentor may be traveling (Wyoming is a lot bigger than Vermont!) and the number of mentees the men-

tor is likely to work with in a given year.

The Mentor Program helps the SPAs if they need financial assistance, using funding provided by the Yellow Chair Foundation, the program's financial partner. The mentors submit written reports at the end of each semester, not only to the Mentor Committee, but also to their SPAs and state funders. Accountability is an important part of the Mentor Program operation.

"Although supporting the Mentor Program is a big yearly commitment," April van Buren said, "our SPA has benefited from the stronger programs and talented mentees who have improved the school publications in our region. Many of our former mentees have joined our board and brought new ideas and enthusiasm that have invigorated our organization." Van Buren is the president of the Kettle Moraine Press Association which serves journalism programs in Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Mentors also stay closely connected to their SPAs, presenting at workshops, chairing events, serving on SPA boards.

At the Tennessee High School Press Association's Fall Conference, for example, mentor Joy Caleb presented sessions.

"I promote this conference with all of my mentees because I think it is a great learning experience not only for the teachers but also for the students," Caleb said. "Most of my mentees attended and brought students."

Candace Bowen runs the fall regional workshops for the Ohio Scholastic Media Association.

"At the Region 5 workshop former mentee Maggie Cogar was promoting the mentoring program – and asked how many had been mentees – it was awesome!" Bowen said.

The Mentor Program encourages SPAs to help mentees get connected with other advisers. They may publicize the program in their newsletter, on their website and at state events. The membership person is usually aware when a school has a new journalism teacher or adviser and can provide the mentors with contact information.

Most SPAs also provide financial support to their mentees, like free membership and free or reduced fees to SPA events. Such incentives help to make it more manageable for mentees to get involved and develop a professional network.

Everyone benefits from this collaboration: mentors, mentees, students, SPAs.

Pennsylvania mentee crafts winning program

Kate Plows, the new adviser of the Friar's Lantern, at Malvern Preparatory School in the greater Philadelphia area, posted a question about mentoring on the JEA listserv since she was new to advising. She had been teaching for more than a decade as an art teacher, primarily pottery, but knew little about advising publications. Jane Blystone saw her request and helped her connect with Kathy Zwiebel, who mentored Plows for the next two years.



Kate Plows

Zwiebel said Plows described the journalism job as "like outer space; the more you learn the bigger it gets, the more humble you feel." But what she accomplished in those years was amazing. She took the journalism program from a basic publication to being a CSPA hybrid crown winner.

"Kathy's mentorship has been a lifesaver for our staff and for me, a hundred times over," Plows said. "From careful reviews and supportive feedback on each issue, to early morning phone calls after I poured my anxieties out over email after midnight, to the encouragement to learn from mistakes and keep progressing, Kathy kept me afloat. Every adviser should be so lucky — and all it takes is a question and a connection to your state organization."

Plows' students won Pennsylvania Student Journalist of the Year in 2016 and 2017, the 2016 JEA Impact Award, 2017 JEA Aspiring Young Journalist, and other state and national recognition. She is this year's Pennsylvania School Press Association Journalism Teacher of the Year and JEA Rising Star.

Plows is now a member of the Pennsylvania School Press Association board of directors to give back. She is also Pennsylvania's new JEA state director.

"I still teach mostly pottery," Plows said. "What a strange road this has been!" She made mugs for all the speakers in the six regional student journalism competitions held this fall across Pennsylvania.

See Plows' blog at <http://teachingcraft.net/> and her article on student surveys in the latest DJNF Update: <http://www.adviserupdate.org/>

Jane Blystone & Kathy Zwiebel contributed to this story.

FROM THE HEART

Committee members' passion for mentoring helps keep Mentor Program fresh and growing

by Linda Barrington

Although not a requirement, the current Mentor Committee members are also mentors. That is an advantage for the program because each one understands the functioning of the program as a participant and is better able to make decisions, especially when they affect how the program operates. They also know each other well after years of working together as mentors.

"Being on Mentoring Committee gives me the opportunity to collaborate in the shaping how JEA Mentoring will grow and adapt," Gary Lindsay said. "We meet twice a year at JEA conventions and connect online several times a month to do this work."

Chairperson Bill Flechtner agrees with him. "Working with these talented and experienced mentors on the committee is inspiring," Flechtner said. "They are passionate about having the committee continually develop a strong program to meet the needs of new and struggling advisers."

Peggy Gregory plays a key role at each convention by developing the agenda for the Mentor Forum.

"As a member of the committee, I not only

get to work with outstanding, dedicated former advisers from around the country," Gregory said, "but I am in contact with most of the inspiring mentors through the forums each year."

Sheila Jones collects, reads and files all the mentor reports twice a year.

"The mentors' semester reports provide a very revealing look at the scope and importance of what each mentor does," Jones said. "What is crystal clear is how each mentor gives his/her mentees information, guidance and training in a personalized way, with tailored support to meet the mentees' and their students' unique needs."

Mary Anne McCloud said she values her experience working on the committee, and with other mentors.

"I am amazed at the wealth of knowledge and expertise mentors have," she said. "I enjoy comparing notes and exchanging ideas to make our mentoring more effective. I feel fortunate to work with professional educators who have a deep passion for high school journalism."

Mentoring inspires the committee members to keep tweaking and developing the Mentor Program to make it better.

"It's a great way to stay connected to my life's work of journalism education," Lindsay said.



Linda Barrington



Peggy Gregory



Bill Flechtner, chair



Gary Lindsay



Mary Anne McCloud



Sheila Jones



Carmen Wendt

Committee members share responsibilities for different aspects of the program:

Bill Flechtner

- Funding, budget, grants
- Mentor recruiting
- New mentor training
- Recordkeeping
- JEA Board, SPA liaison

Linda Barrington

- Mentoring Matters
- Online mentor map

Peggy Gregory

- Mentor Forum: agendas and supplies

Sheila Jones

- Mentor reports
- Data analysis

Gary Lindsay

- Mentor website

Mary Anne McCloud

- Forum attendance
- Help for New Advisers and roundtables

Carmen Wendt

- Meeting minutes
- Exit survey collection, analysis

BEST ADVICE FROM MY MENTOR

Mentees share what they've learned.

CAPTIONS

"I was having a difficult time working with students on writing, especially captions. My mentor Carol Strauss told me that each story or caption needs to answer WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW. This made what I needed to convey to students so much easier! It's improved our captions, stories, and fact finding a great deal, not to mention poster designs and all communications. Students are specific now when it comes to emails, letters, and ads copywriting. Very simple advice to share with students with a great deal of impact."



Birmingham Community Charter High School
Lake Balboa, California

ROCKING THE BOAT

"My mentor [Dave Wallner] came to talk with me and my students when I first became the newspaper adviser. He encouraged my editors and reporters to tackle the important issues in our community. We have a principal who really doesn't want the boat rocked, so to hear a voice saying, "Rock the boat a bit!" has been inspiring. If it weren't for my mentor, we'd have a newspaper you could use as a pillow — all fluff."



Beloit Memorial High School
Beloit, Wisconsin

BUILDING A PROGRAM

"It takes three years to build a program." That may not sound like much, but Sheila [Jones] has said that to me many times when I've been surprised, frustrated or simply overwhelmed by all of the steps it takes to create a cohesive team and process. When I remind myself of those words, it allows me to slow down and focus on the building of those steps that will eventually lead to the building of the program."



Dakota Ridge High School
Colorado Springs, Colorado

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

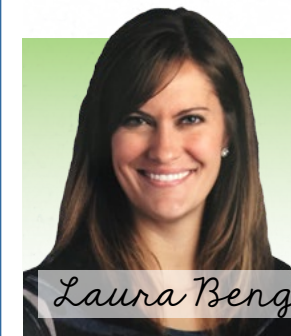
"The best advice I have received from my mentor has been to appreciate my accomplishments as an adviser. I am continually looking ahead to the areas to improve on in the next publication. During our visits, Mary Anne [McCloud] points out what my students have accomplished."



Rockhurst High School
Kansas City, Missouri

COLLABORATE

"The best advice my mentor Linda Barrington has given me thus far is to take advantage of available resources. Look for opportunities to connect and collaborate to be most efficient with your resources. Building a new program from the ground up can be overwhelming, but leaning on others in the journalism community and in your school community can make a seemingly insurmountable task seem manageable."



Pewaukee High School
Pewaukee, Wisconsin

IMPROVEMENT

"I would be lost without the support and guidance of my mentor Sheila Jones. I came to teaching after nearly 30 years as a TV journalist. While I can 'do,' teaching is a whole different world with nuances that can be challenging to navigate. Sheila keeps an eye on our content by monitoring our website and social media and gives balanced feedback and suggestions for improvements. She has helped us improve our publications with lesson planning, coaching and encouragement. She is invaluable as a resource. I am blessed to have her support!"



Englewood High School
Englewood, Colorado



READY FOR THE FUTURE IT STARTS WITH A MENTOR'S HELP

Exiting mentees who have completed the Mentor Program respond to an exit survey. These are the most important areas they say their mentor helped them understand:

- press rights and responsibility
- technology skills
- useful organizations
- how to improve student media
- staff organization
- journalism skills
- how to work with administrators and faculty
- time management
- advising skills
- journalism skills
- business skills

Mentees said these were the most useful/helpful things their mentors had done:

- Suggesting sources of information — online, books, organizations, people in the community
- Helping them develop a network with other advisers
- Helping them develop their approach to dealing with challenging situations, such as a conference with a parent or student
- E-mail exchanges
- Face-to-face meetings with them
- Providing professional materials
- Helping them develop their approach to dealing with the administration

Almost all said they appreciated that their mentor listened.



“Our mentor, Joy McCaleb, is assisting nine advisers at seven schools across Tennessee. These represent newspaper and yearbook staffs, with environments ranging from new programs to new advisers to new set-ups (e.g., a publication switching to after-school). Joy is super-charging them all, encouraging them to enter contests and attend workshops.”

~Jimmy McCollum, Tennessee High School Press Association executive director

ABOUT US

www.jea.org jeamentoring.org

President: Sarah Nichols

Vice-president: Val Kibler

Past President: Mark Newton

Executive Director: Kelly Glasscock



Mentor Program Committee

Bill Flechtner, chair

Linda Barrington

Peggy Gregory

Sheila Jones

Gary Lindsay

Mary Anne McCloud

Carmen Wendt

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