



The Math Forum @ Drexel University

Online Mentoring Project at a Glance

For more details, please visit
<http://mathforum.org/pow/omp/>

The Online Mentoring Project began as an NSF-funded project. Its goal is to create a dynamic online environment which prepares future teachers to facilitate math problem solving and communication. Elementary, middle, and high school pre-service teachers learn to mentor students through the Math Forum's Problem of the Week (PoW) service. This is a unique opportunity for pre-service teachers to focus on how students think and communicate about mathematics before facing the complexities of the classroom.

The Online Mentoring Guide is a curriculum tool that exists in Blackboard's Vista platform (formerly WebCT). This self-guided instructional system creates an interactive space where pre-service teachers first solve a problem and explain their solution, and then mentor some of their peers' solutions. The Guide then moves to a broader discussion of mentoring, including effective techniques for assessing and responding to students. Pre-service teachers conclude their instruction by mentoring actual PoW submitters.

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How is the program implemented?

The OMP typically is integrated as a unit within an undergraduate course in math problem solving or math methods. It could also be used as a module in a graduate course or as inservice professional development for practicing teachers.

How much time should I plan to dedicate to this project?

The OMG is an asynchronous unit. Faculty instructors (Group Leaders) can decide how to balance time spent in and out of class. The OMG training module typically takes about two weeks, given normal schedules, but can be compacted or extended. Student mentors spend another two weeks replying to submitters in one of our Problems of the Week.

What are the Group Leader's responsibilities?

During the OMG phase instructors set a schedule of assignment deadlines, monitor and participate in discussions, and lead students through study of the problem they'll mentor along with the accompanying scoring rubric and Expected Solutions. During the live mentoring phase instructors are responsible for "approving" their student mentors' replies, which often involves requesting changes before the reply is sent to the student.

How are Group Leaders prepared to lead the OMP?

Instructors and their TAs participate in a section of the course simulating exactly what their student mentors will be doing. This training should take place during an academic term prior to using it with your students, so that you can plan for effective implementation.

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Interested? Email Claire Mead to be notified when the next Group Leader training is scheduled.

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