Rebecca Harrison

Mentoring Me

Self Evaluation:

In our district we have been struggling with mentorship issues for years. I personally have often felt isolated in my journey as a teacher, however, I am lucky as I have a very supportive staff with many other young teachers who are not afraid to share the trials and tribulations of our practice. Many of the individuals that I was in my teacher program with dropped out within a few years of beginning their careers, and this is a trend that I have been told is fairly frequent. Within the first five years teachers get overwhelmed, they are isolated for much of the day within their own little world and, once they are finished in a school program, they rarely are given feedback on their teaching. I recently had a very difficult class and when our district received some special support for classroom teachers with major behavioural concerns I was provided with a specialist for a few days who watched my teaching and then discussed aspects of it. This was not done for evaluation for my district, but just to aid me in my teaching practices. This process has informed much of my classroom practice and I just imagine what would have happened to all those great teachers who got overwhelmed and gave up, if they had similar experiences of support. I searched online for mentorship programs but could not find anything comprehensive. This is my attempt to promote a service that I think is lacking and a process that all school districts should initiate. Technology provides a very valid way to share information. Teachers can upload videos, see pictures of mentor teacher’s classrooms, compare ideas and ask questions without feeling judged.

Major Strengths:

* Although there are other sites that provide similar services, there are few that go farther than providing videos, or lesson plans organized within subject areas. Mentoring Me would provide a more comprehensive “all-in-one-place” holistic approach
* There is a need for a comprehensive and effective mentorship policy across districts
* There is a major push towards using technology in the school districts and this program would support that
* By using a format similar to a dating site we can ensure that the majority of people would be able to use it effectively, as dating sites are successful even among those who are not internet savvy
* The site is already set up and just requires funding to advertise

Major Weaknesses:

* Will require immediate funding to make the site feasible
* There are other programs providing similar services and without establishing a foothold in the market at this point, it could impact the success of the venture
* The need for leadership in advertising and marketing