



The Math Forum @ Drexel University

A research and educational enterprise of the Goodwin College of Professional Studies

Online Mentoring Project at a Glance

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

The Online Mentoring Project (OMP) 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 Problems 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 (OMG) is a self-guided instructional system that exists in Blackboard's Vista platform (formerly WebCT). In this interactive space pre-service teachers first solve a problem and explain their solutions, 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 also could 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 OMP 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, but can be compacted or extended. Student mentors spend another two weeks replying to submitters in one of our PoW services.

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 will mentor and its accompanying Scoring Rubric and Mentor 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 submitter.

How are Group Leaders prepared to lead the OMP?

Instructors 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.

What does the program cost?

We ask participating universities to pay \$300 per term to help cover our administrative expenses. In the first year we also ask them to "introduce" us to three K-12 schools so that we might approach them regarding our PoW subscriptions and other services.

Interested? Email Max Ray to be notified when the next Group Leader training is scheduled.

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