

The **Supporting Mentor Teachers (SMTP) Project** is a specific initiative by the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education designed to transform the role of a mentor teacher from a "supervisor" into a "specialized coach."

The SMTP provides the professional development (PD) that teachers often feel they are lacking when they take on a student.

## 1. What is the SMTP? (Program Summary)

The SMTP is a series of **non-credit, graduate-level modules** developed in collaboration with field experience partners. It focuses on the "science" of mentoring. It isn't about *what* to teach (subject matter), but *how* to mentor (pedagogical coaching).

The modules typically cover five core pillars:

1. **The Role of the Mentor Teacher:** Moving beyond expertise to becoming a coach.
2. **Fostering Effective Relationships:** Building the trust necessary for a student to take risks and grow.
3. **Reflections and Growth:** Using action research and inquiry within the practicum.
4. **Effective Learning Environments:** How to co-create a classroom where both the mentor and student can thrive.
5. **Written Feedback:** Mastering the art of providing formative assessments that actually move the needle for the student.

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## 2. Direct Benefits to the Mentor Teacher

When you are recruiting mentors in Parkland, the SMTP is your "hook." It answers the question, "*What's in it for me?*"

### A. Professional Prestige & Credibility

Teachers who complete the SMTP modules aren't just "hosting a student"; they are becoming **University-certified mentors**. This looks exceptional on a resume and is a clear indicator to Parkland School Division leadership that this teacher is a high-level professional ready for leadership roles.

### Program Synopsis

The SMTP is a series of evidence-based modules developed in collaboration with field experience partners.

## B. A "Ladder" to Graduate Studies

One of the unique benefits of the U of A program is the **laddering effect**.

- Completion of these modules can often be used as a stepping stone toward a **Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (GCES)**.
- That certificate can then be credited toward a **Master of Education (M.Ed.)**.
- *Pitch*: "Host an AFX student, complete the SMTP, and you're already on your way to your Master's degree."

## C. Access to Research & Modern Strategy

The SMTP keeps veteran teachers connected to the University's latest research. It prevents "professional stagnation." Mentors report that the SMTP helps them stay current with new terminology and provincial standards (like the TQS) that they might have forgotten since their own graduation.

## D. Shared Responsibility (Not Extra Work)

The SMTP teaches mentors how to **delegate and co-teach** effectively. Instead of the mentor doing 100% of the work while the student watches, the SMTP provides strategies for a "co-pilot" model. This actually **decreases the mentor's daily stress** by maximizing the utility of having two adults in the room.

"We aren't just asking you to take a student; we are offering you access to the **U of A Supporting Mentor Teachers Project**. This is university-sanctioned leadership training that can ladder into a Master's degree, fulfill your LQS requirements for the year, and give you a trained partner in the classroom to help manage complexity. You grow as an expert, and our division grows a future colleague."

## Comparison: Elevating the Placement Experience

Focus Area	Standard Placement	SMTP-Supported Placement
Primary Approach	Supervision & evaluation of a student.	<b>Pedagogical Coaching:</b> Collaborative professional inquiry.
Professional Development	Learn "on the job" while teaching.	<b>Certified Training:</b> Access to U of A graduate-level research modules.
Workload Management	Student observes; Mentor teaches.	<b>Co-Teaching Model:</b> Shared instruction to manage classroom complexity.
Career Impact	Service to the profession.	<b>Academic Credit:</b> A stepping stone to an Alberta Master's degree.
Recruitment Value	General observation.	<b>Vetted Pipeline:</b> Prepares high-quality candidates for the PSD substitute roster.