

Working with New Students in Returning Cohorts

With the start of each school year, there may be a handful of new students that are enrolled in mentor2.O, which will already be comprised of returning students from the prior year. Therefore, Program Managers (PMs) will often need to simultaneously introduce new students to the program and reorient returning students.

Click on the links below to jump to the specific section.

- [Mentee Orientation for new students and refreshers for returning students](#)
- [Using Conversations to accelerate relationship building](#)
- [Assign newly matched pairs past lessons](#)
- [Tailor event curriculum for newly matched pairs](#)
- [Invite newly matched pairs to events hosted for new cohorts](#)
- [Frequent Individual Pair Support](#)

Mentee Orientation for new students and refreshers for returning students

With a mixed audience of new and returning students, you won't be able to do a traditional mentee orientation like you did at the start of the program. However, you can easily use the first lesson for returning students, "Refresh and Reconnect," for both audiences. Utilize the experiences that returning students share in the lesson's activities to educate new students about the program; hearing from their peers may be a powerful motivator for new students. While returning students complete the Canvas activities to reconnect with their mentors, new students can work on their mentee applications. You can more easily facilitate this process by having new students sit together at the start of the year and have your co-teacher work with them to complete their applications and other necessary enrollment tasks.

Using Conversations to accelerate relationship building

Once new students are enrolled and matched, they'll engage in the assigned lessons along with their peers who have been participating in the program for some time. You can use Conversations to help these newly matched pairs work on relationship building while still engaging in the curriculum designed for that grade level. Create some prompting questions using content from early relationship-building lessons from the 9th grade curriculum to help newly matched pairs begin messaging each other on Conversations. For example, create questions using the "A Day in the Life of Me" worksheet ([Lesson 9.1.4](#)), have students and mentors create a shortened version of the "I Am From Poem" ([Lesson 9.1.5](#)), or give students examples of questions they can ask their mentors ([Lesson 9.2.2](#)). For more ideas, browse through other lessons in Units 1 and 2 of the 9th grade curriculum.

Assign newly matched pairs past lessons

Newly matched pairs in a returning cohort will automatically have access to all lessons previously scheduled for that cohort. They can navigate to these past lessons through Portfolio. Once matched, new students and their mentors will engage in the currently scheduled lessons along with their peers. However, during the first few weeks of the match, you can assign these new pairs specific activities from past lessons to help facilitate relationship building as an addition to the currently scheduled lessons. For ideas, browse through early relationship building lessons in the 9th grade curriculum.

Tailor event curriculum for newly matched pairs

Most event curriculum will often include a large group activity at the start of the event. These activities are a great opportunity for both new and returning pairs to build their relationship and get to know other pairs in the cohort. In addition to the large group activity, you can also provide additional relationship-building curriculum to newly matched pairs while encouraging them to engage in the event curriculum designed for the cohort. Be sure to check-in individually with newly matched pairs to make sure they're not overwhelmed and feel welcomed.

Invite newly matched pairs to events hosted for new cohorts

You can invite newly matched pairs to attend events hosted for new cohorts in addition to their cohort's regularly scheduled events. For example, you can invite a new pair matched in the 11th grade to an event for 9th grade pairs. That way, your newly matched pairs will have more opportunities to meet in-person and can engage in activities designed to foster relationship building at the start of the match. Be sure to let your newly matched mentors and mentees know that they are encouraged to participate at a higher than normal level because they were matched late — after a few months, they will be held to standard program expectations.

Frequent Individual Pair Support

Make sure to check-in more frequently with your newly matched pairs to see how they are doing. Some pairs may hit it off right away while others may need more time. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed as a newly matched pair in a returning cohort so it will be important for PMs to monitor their progress more closely at the start of the relationship.
