Using eMentoring's activities in your class

About the activities

Rural eMentoring BC's one-on-one mentoring program offers an optional set of activities, organized into themed units that come together as a semi-structured curriculum.

eMentoring's unique curriculum was developed in response to consultations with educators, students, parents and other mentoring programs, who suggested that we provide activities for students and their mentors to work through together. They also suggested some topics for the activities, and we hired a rural high school teacher-turned PhD candidate to design the curriculum itself.

The curriculum was first deployed in 2016, and has since become a living document. Each year we take user feedback, from teachers, students, and mentors, and use it to inform the topics, activities and structure of the curriculum. In 2022 we became a community partner with UBC's Community Field Experience course, allowing us to host teacher candidates to review and update our curriculum each year, keeping it fresh and relevant.

Over 75% of our past participants indicated that they found the information in the curriculum useful – we hope your students do as well!

Units

ReMBC's activities are organized into 13 units, each with a different theme. The entire curriculum is accessed through students' accounts on MentorCity, and it works like an online course.

What's in a unit
Each unit has the following components:

Start here: Each unit has a "Start here" page, where students are introduced to the unit. This page describes and explains the goals for the unit and how to work through it.

Warm up activity: These are a few questions to help get students thinking about the unit's topic. They can choose whether to share their answers with their mentors.

Lessons: Each lesson provides some information about a topic and then asks students to apply this information to their own lives. Since every student learns and expresses themselves differently, students have the opportunity to choose between different options for gaining, synthesizing, and communicating information.

- **How lessons work**: Students view background information and then choose (or follow your instructions) whether to do an activity with their mentors or ask their mentors a question. Each lesson has the following components.
    - **Background information**: Students begin each lesson by gaining some information on the unit's topic, usually through a video or article. The activity they do for the lesson, or the questions they ask their mentors, will be based on this information.

- o **Option 1: Activity and deliverable**: Students do an activity that helps them learn more about and reflect on a topic, and then produce a deliverable that shows what they have learned. Students have the opportunity to choose the activities that best suit their learning styles and interests, and the deliverables that best help them express their understanding and growth. These are meant to be done collaboratively with their mentors, or as a jumping off point to help them discuss the topic with their mentors.
  - o **Option 2: Questions for mentors**: Students should use their mentors as a resource for information and advice about each topic. Encourage your students to ask their mentors any questions they have about the topic; we also provide a list of questions students can choose from if they can't think of their own.
- You or your students may decide which of the lesson components to complete – but please inform the eMentoring staff so we can communicate this to the mentors.

Extension activities: These are other activities that have to do with the unit's topic, but might not necessarily be applicable to everyone.

Additional resources: These are resources for if students would like to learn more about the unit's topic, as well as further support or services both within their community and beyond.

Portfolio Project (optional)

The activities students do within a lesson can be part of a larger Portfolio Project, designed to be a meaningful way for students to document and reflect on their experiences and growth during the program, and also apply what they learned to real life.

About the Portfolio

Throughout the course, students will build their Portfolios by collaborating with their mentors to create a polished version of each deliverable they choose to complete. The Portfolio is meant to provide the following:

- **Choice, ownership, & agency**: Since students have choices between different types of activities and deliverables for each topic, they can to tailor their portfolios to their strengths and interests.
- **Documentation of growth**: The Portfolio Project is meant to document each students' personal journey. They will add the deliverables they create throughout the program piece by piece to progressively build their portfolios – it is not a separate final project to be completed at the end.

Each student's Portfolio will be a comprehensive reflection of their learning journey that documents their growth, challenges, and achievements. Encourage them to refer to their Portfolios to reflect on what they've learned and how they can apply these lessons to their lives.

How it works

Students, or you, can choose which of the deliverables should be included in the Portfolio. Each deliverable included in the Portfolio should be a final, polished product. Students should work with their mentors on their Portfolio pieces. Please tell the eMentoring staff and the mentors which deliverables should be included in the Portfolio, and consider the following:

- Give your students adequate time to polish each Portfolio piece. They may want to get feedback from their mentors, or even go through a few rounds of edits.
- Advise them to create a folder on their devices (or on the cloud) with all their Portfolio pieces.
- Ensure students share their final Portfolio pieces with their mentors.
- We highly encourage you to make time for students to create a final reflection once their Portfolios are complete. Ask them to reflect on, in the method of their choosing: what growth they have seen in themselves and how their Portfolio exemplifies this? What have they achieved and what are they proud of? How they will use their Portfolio in the future?

Logistics and delivery

Our curriculum is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to meet your classroom needs. Here are a few questions you should ask yourself and your students as you create your eMentoring plan. We will ask you to specify each of these things when you complete your teacher sign-up form.

How often will students work on the program?
Please set aside time **at least once per week** for students to access an internet-connected device and message their mentors. Try to plan for the same day(s) each week, so that mentors can know when to expect to hear from your students.

When deciding which days of the week to work on the program, remember that messaging is asynchronous and we allow our mentors 72 hours to respond to their mentees (i.e., avoid having students work on it two days in a row).

We strongly recommend that the time you dedicate to the program be in-person sessions where you (or the point person) are available to monitor and assist students. For example, set aside 45 minutes twice a week in-class to work on the program.

How long will you work on the program?
Choose how many units you would like to complete based on how much time you have. Assuming that the students are working on the program at least once a week, here is how much time you should allow:
- 1 hour for students to complete their profiles. This process also includes a short course that introduces the students to the program.
- 1 week for the eMentoring staff to make the matches.
- 1 week for the students to meet their mentor and learn how to use the program.
- 1 week for the pairs to say goodbye at the end of the program.
- **One unit takes around 4-6 hours to complete^** or around 2 weeks if students are working on it once a week. You can choose the number of units to complete based on your course's timeline, or use the following as examples:
    - 2 – 3 units per academic "Quarter" (10 weeks)
    - 4 – 6 units per academic semester (18 weeks)
    - One school year for the entire curriculum

^The unit completion time stated above does NOT include time to do the Extension Activities or additional info, as these are optional.

^Some units take longer to complete. Please read the descriptions provided carefully, we will tell you which ones take longer.

How will you work through the activities?
It is completely up to you and your students how you will use the activities in your classroom. Here are a few examples:
- **Move through the units as a class**: The whole class works on the same unit at the same time.
    - For example: in the first four class periods the students work on Finding Inspiration, the next four class periods Rural to Urban, etc.
    - Or, create a lesson around each unit: review the background information together (e.g., show the background info video) and have a class discussion, and then give students time within the class period to work on the activity and write to their mentors.
- **Students to work through the units at their own pace**: provide class time for students to view the background information, work on the activities and write to their mentors.

- o **Example**: every Monday and Thursday students have 45 minutes in class to work on the program. If they want to take more or less time on a unit, they may do so as long as they complete all units required.

Please let the eMentoring staff and, if possible, the mentors know approximately when you will be working on each unit. Send us your schedule ahead of time, but, since plans change, please also give us a heads-up when you will be switching to a new unit.

Also, please consider what should happen if a student falls behind (due to absence, taking longer with a certain unit, etc.). If you are moving through the units as a class, should the student move to the next unit without finishing the previous one? If students are working at their own pace, and are not on track to finish but are having fruitful conversations, should they move on?

Knowing all these things will help the mentors keep your students on track.

Who chooses the units?
Our curriculum is modular and you and/or your students can choose which units and activities to do and in what order. Here are some ways that other classes have chosen, but feel free to think of your own:
- **Teacher's choice**: the teacher chooses which units to assign based on what they will be teaching and the course's goals.
  - o **Example**: replace your career pathways lesson with our activities by requiring students to complete the Career Exploration and Educational and Career Pathways units.
- **Students' choice:** students choose which units to complete based on their interests.
  - o **Example**: The class votes on which units they would like to do together.
  - o **Example**: Each student can choose any 3 units to complete by the end of the course.
- **Combination**: both teacher and students choose the units.
  - o **Example**: The teacher assigns Finding Inspiration and Getting Hired to supplement her goal setting and resumé creation lessons. She also allows students to choose 2 other units to complete based on their interests.
  - o **Example**: The teacher assigns Agency in the World to supplement his networking and relationships lesson, and lets students vote on 2 other units.

Visit our website to view our unit summaries or contact us to access our demo account on MentorCity.

How, or will you be assessing the students' work in the program?
If you will be assessing students' work in the program, what does success look like? Please consider:
- What does it look like when students "complete" a unit? What will you be assessing?
  - o **Example**: students must complete each lesson's deliverable and you will assign a grade to each deliverable. The program is meant to provide concrete tools and skills for students to carry with them into the future.
  - o **Example**: eMentoring is worth 10% of the students' course grade. If students engage regularly, they get the full 10%, if they are very engaged, they get extra credit. The program is meant to be low-pressure and fun, allowing for students to take risks and step outside their comfort zone.
  - o **Example**: You will assign a grade to each student's Portfolio at the end of the course.

If you will not be assessing students, how will you hold students accountable and ensure they engage with the activities in a meaningful way?

Thanks for reading our guide to eMentoring's activities! We designed our activities to be easy to use, applicable to a variety of contexts, and relevant for high school students, so we hope that you try them!

If you would like some help envisioning how to incorporate activities into your classroom or with your group of students, please contact us at e.mentoring@ubc.ca, we'd love to chat!