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## 'Retired' consultant now teaches the teachers

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Phyllis King spent a quarter of a century in the classroom, mostly teaching at-risk students, but now she is using her experience to help other teachers with their classroom challenges.

King, who retired in 2007 after 30 years with the Groveport-Madison School District as a teacher and district mentor, started her consulting business, Creative Educational Solutions soon after retiring.

Now she gives seminars to teachers at district events around Central Ohio, usually during in-service days.

She said she wants to mentor teachers to give help them through her own experiences.

"I feel like I bring something that no other seminar brings," said King. "I know all of the stories and know what it's like to be there."

She said she enjoys trading war stories about classroom situations with teachers and uses humor to help the teachers learn from those experiences.

Her philosophy is that teachers need to have self-confidence, which can be sensed by the students.

"It's all about connections and relationships," King said. "The more self-confidence they get ... they're going to be good models of it. I work with teachers so they can be transformed from the inside out."

King, who also works as an adjunct professor at Ohio Dominican University, said teachers need to block out external distractions, such as blaming the school administration or parents for problems.

"What I hear a lot from teachers is that they do not get enough support from the administration for something like discipline, but now they (learn) they can handle their own problems," she said.

"Once they're teaching from their own strengths they can be a lot more effective."

She said that if teachers aren't inspired they can't inspire their students.

Being authentic and showing that they can be themselves, too, is important, King said.

"You have to show the kids that you're authentic, that you're optimistic even in the most challenging classroom environment," she said. "The classroom sometimes can be combative because the student may be missing the nurturing at home."

For example, she said, if a teacher sends a student to the principal's office it shows that the teacher may not be strong enough to handle that situation himself or that the teacher has given up on the student.

But if the teacher shows self-confidence and authenticity, the students likely will respect the teacher, King explained.

She said she herself went through a transformation as a teacher and after reading some self-help and other motivational books she started to form the philosophy that is the foundation of her consulting business.

She said she also used a life coach.

"She helped me hone down on what I'm good at," said King.

After retiring as a teacher, King, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from The Ohio State University, remained with the Groveport-Madison School District for another five years to help mentor first-year students.

While most of her work these days is through group seminars, she also provides one-on-one consulting with teachers and sometimes even sits in on classrooms to observe a teacher's technique and then make recommendations.

She said most of her work comes through word-of-mouth, networking, her connections from 30 years in the field and her website.

Ultimately, King said, teaching is about relationships and students will perform better in the classroom if they have a productive relationship with their teachers.

"When teachers show they're leading with compassion, kids see it and embrace it," King said. "Kids relate to authenticity and strength in a teacher."