ARRL Continuing Education Program Mentor Guide

Introduction

Evaluations received from students of our Continuing Education courses indicate the tremendous value that mentor interactions add to our courses. Students who entered courses with some knowledge of the subject matter often comment that their mentor opened up new perspectives on the material, or offered an explanation that made concepts make a lot more sense. Likewise, when students receive no feedback or nothing more than cursory acknowledgements to their work or their questions, their evaluations reflect their disappointment. We tell you this so that you will know you can have a very significant impact in your role as a CEP mentor. To many new hams, you also represent a first exposure to the amateur radio community. Your attitudes and demeanor often form the basis of a first and lasting impression. It's a big responsibility!

The Importance of Effective Communication

Mentoring is about helping people learn. Whether you're teaching in a classroom or online, you need to find ways to COMMUNICATE effectively with your students. If you can't talk to them you can't help them. When mentoring in an online environment this means that your writing skills have to be top-notch. Take care with what you write and constantly watch for ways to improve. If you're teaching in a classroom, the premium is on your ability to speak clearly, but you should also be preparing handouts and other material to assist in the learning process. Look for ways to do it well.

It's especially critical in the online environment for mentors to establish a relationship with students at the outset of the course and then to sustain that relationship by being responsive. You need to create an effective online voice and presence. If you would like to do a more reading about instructing online you may find this article helpful. Here is the link to "Tips for Training Online Instructors" by Greg Kearsley. http://home.sprynet.com/~gkearsley/OItips.htm Though all of the tips included in this paper from an online instruction expert don't apply to the more restricted role we ask of you as a mentor for ARRL's online courses, the author touches on many of the elements of successful online instruction.

For a quick summary, here are the most important points to grasp about the importance of communication in online learning.

- Communication: Think of going to a traditional classroom yourself. If you take a seat in a classroom, but no one arrives to tell you why you are there or to provide instruction you probably would not stay long.
- Collaboration makes it increasingly possible for students to learn from one another and to more rapidly synthesize their thoughts through interaction, reflection and exploration. On the new Moodle platform we will be enabling a Discussion Forum tool where you can share ideas, experiences and discuss topics as a group.
- Feedback: Think about it—would you continue in a conversation when there's no reply? It is important to be in your course frequently, providing feedback to activities and assignments for which the students have worked hard to convey their knowledge and opinions as well as providing input in discussions. Without the visual contact they will look for your verbal response to determine how well they're meeting your objectives.

Regular presence in the course is necessary to compensate for the lack of physical presence. How you would feel if you received no acknowledgement from your instructor?

Building Rapport

Nothing speeds learning like a student's confidence in his or her instructor/mentor. It is very important that you introduce yourself at the beginning of the course, providing your students with some background so students know they're dealing with someone who understands what they're talking about. If you trust the person who is teaching or mentoring you, you will learn much better than you would otherwise. Likewise, it's important for you to reach out to your students and invite them to share a little about their background. As a mentor, you need to put your effort into developing this rapport with your students. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, NOT THEIRS! Be approachable, and available.

Essential to building a rapport is to be responsive and timely in your response. We ask that you set a standard of responding to your students within 2-3 business days. If you are going to be away and unable to respond in the usual fashion, use the communication tools available in the Moodle platform to let your students know what to expect. There are numerous activities for students to complete in a course, sometimes several during a week, and if you do not respond in a timely fashion to a student's question or provide feedback on their work, the student may fall behind and have difficulty catching up to complete the course on time.

The students who take the online courses are smart and knowledgeable. As a general rule, they can pick up the material easily and don't need a lot of help to understand it. When you are critical of a student's response, make sure your criticism is POSITIVE, not negative. Sometimes there are unexpected roadblocks. In one case, a student sent a note to a mentor not understanding what to do on a particular emergency communications activity involving a snow emergency because they'd never seen snow. That student had lived in the Virgin Islands his whole life. One of the major reasons mentors are involved in the courses is because situations like this, beyond the expectations of the course designers, do come up. Someone needs to determine what to do. In this particular case, the mentor assigned an alternate, but equivalent activity and the student completed successfully.

As mentors, we need to be sensitive to the student's point of view. We need to see the course through their eyes and be aware that they may see things quite differently than we do. Students vary widely in their experience and we don't always know where a student stands on that scale. We've had students who are newly licensed hams who've never worked with any of the material in the courses while others are highly qualified engineers or professional first responders who have a very deep background for the course material. As mentors, we can't assume a student's background until we learn something about them.

One of the great benefits of being a mentor is working with different students from different places and seeing the different perspectives that they have. A student with different experiences will often bring up things you may never have thought of. The differences however can also be a potential source of conflict. The most frequent cause of complaints about mentors comes about when a mentor, thinking that their student is learning the information for the first time, adds some extra guidance beyond what the student is asking for but finds that the student's experience causes them to resent what they consider to be "lecturing."

The most common student problem is being unaware that completing the activities and submitting them to the mentor for evaluation and approval is an integral part of completing the course. Usually just clarifying the rules for completion is enough, but sometimes a student feels their experience makes it unnecessary for them to bother with the activities. As their mentor, you are in the best position to determine what should be done, and if you're satisfied that a student knows the material, you can choose to allow variations. However, if you're not sure or you're uncomfortable, or the student is getting pushy, you can fall back on the advice of other mentors, the mentor coordinators, or the CEP Administrator.

A recent policy change will allow students who are not licensed to participate in the Introduction to Emergency Communications course. You may need to adapt certain activities in the course for students without a license, while still assuring that they learn about the role and capabilities of amateur radio in the activity context.

We encourage students to catch problems and suggest improvements in the courses. We want to continue to improve the course, but no changes are accepted at face value without review by the editorial team. Once a change is approved, it will be added directly to the online material if it's minor. When a change requires a larger revision, it will be passed on for the next major revision of the course. These revisions are done periodically to keep the material as up-to-date as possible.

Emergency Communications courses have a particular issue that requires mentor sensitivity. The issue exists because emergency management is a localized practice and what is done in one region may be handled differently in another. This issue gets more comments from students than anything else. Some students will disagree with the course material, but you need to point out that the course tries to highlight key principles everyone should understand and that specific examples will always be specific to a particular area. The course development group makes every effort to get recommendations from across the country about what the underlying principles are, but there will always be some differences between the courses and emergency communications as practiced by a specific ARES/RACES group. Students should discuss differences with their local ARES/RACES coordinators to determine how best to handle differences in training between their local group and the courses.

Sometimes a student will focus on a particular test question or test answer and doggedly keep coming back to it over and over again. In a situation like this, try to help the student see that the questions and answers cannot cover every situation in depth and there are always exceptions that simply don't fit with the multiple choice format of the questions or the essay format of the activities. We're asking the student to make their best judgment when answering questions or activities. The quizzes provide immediate feedback about whether they chose correctly and you as a mentor provide feedback about their activity answers. You need to remember that some questions and answers may be in the process of correction because others have raised the issue.

Whenever you have a difficulty, your best resource is other mentors. A private mentor discussion group is available to you as a mentor. It is maintained on Yahoo Groups by our Mentor Coordinators (Terry Dettmann WX7S and Stan Kaplan WB9RQR). Questions posted there are seen by hundreds of mentors going all the way back to the beginning of the program. Other mentors are happy to respond with their advice and suggestions. If you're not already a member of the group, contact the CEP Administrator at cep@arrl.org to request a membership invitation.

How the CEP On-line Course System Works: An Overview

The Moodle online platform. ARRL's Continuing Education Program courses are hosted on a server at Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC). The courses are run on a platform called Moodle, which is an acronym for Modular Object Oriented Distributed Learning Environment. Instructions on how to use the Moodle functions that are being used in the course are provided in a document at the beginning of the course. A special addendum of instructions relating to the specific Moodle tools you'll use as a mentor is provided as a separate document, linked here. [Link to Moodle instructions.]

Logging In. Access to the Moodle platform is through the ARRL website and requires login to member user profile on the ARRL website. Full ARRL membership is required for mentors but is not required for students. To obtain access to the ARRL website, and hence the course platform, all students must established a user profile on the ARRL website. If the student is not a full ARRL member they must register as a "Guest" on the ARRL website. A Guest registration can be established for 90 days. Passwords are managed through the tools provided on the ARRL website.

Student Course History. ARRL Members and Guests have access to a Student Course History page on our website at: www.arrl.org/student-course-history. This page will provide a record of any ARRL courses the student has completed that has been recorded in the ARRL CEP database, provide the access point to enter online courses on the Moodle platform and provide a link to download and print certificates for courses completed.

Mentor Student List and Access to Moodle. Mentors will find records of previous courses and students mentored for the ARRL CEP accessible through the ARRL website at www.arrl.org/mentor-student-list. This page also provides the entry portal to the Moodle platform for mentors. You'll want to save this URL in your "Favorites" menu on the ARRL website so you can return to it easily. If you forget how to locate it: go to the "Licensing, Education & Training" menu tab, then in the gray menu bar at the left, click on "Volunteer

Instructors/Mentors," then "Mentoring Online Courses." You'll see the link for the "Mentor Student List" in the gray menu box.

Role of CEP Administrator. The CEP Administrator is responsible for student enrollments, registration, withdrawals, refunds, creating rosters for course sessions, mentor assignments, Moodle platform permissions and dealing with all administrative problems other than log-in IDs and passwords. We've tried to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions on the ARRL website so look there for answers first: www.arrl.org/online-course-faqs. If there is still a problem, assistance is needed or questions remain about any of these issues, direct them to cep@arrl.org. Be aware that our CEP Administrator is only available part-time. We do our best to address emails and calls with 2 business days.

Support/ the CTDLC Help Desk. The CTDLC Help Desk at esupport@ctdlc.org provides assistance to help users resolve access problems that may be due to browser settings and Internet filters and communication issues. They will also be able to help students with Moodle functionality and navigation issues as well as computer configuration issues. Clicking on the "Support" tab when logged into a course on the Moodle platform will take users to information that will answer some frequently asked questions and provide access to the Help Desk ticket system supported by CTDLC. CTDLC is responsible solely for delivering the course on the Moodle platform; they know nothing about the course enrollment process, about the technical content, nor about the ARRL procedures for course administration.

Course Opening Process/ the Mentor Call. Before the course session goes live, the process starts at the ARRL like this:

1. Approximately two weeks before a course session opens, the CEP Administrator sends a request for volunteer mentors. Mentors are asked to respond if they are available to take students. The administrator cycles through the list of mentors to call upon a different group each time. The frequency with which you receive a call will depend on the size of the mentor pool and/or the number of students who enroll in the course.
2. The administrator assigns students to mentors who have replied that they are available to accept students. If too few mentors reply, a second call will be issued. Mentors are usually assigned no more than 4 students in any single course section.
3. Two or three days before the course section opens, the CEP Administrator will send student rosters to the assigned mentors via email and set up the student and mentor groups in the Moodle platform.
4. One to two days before the class section opens, the CEP Administrator sends a "Welcome" message to each student in the class that includes the name and email address of his or her assigned mentor. This message also provides instructions on logging into the course. You will receive a copy of the "Welcome" message when your students receive it.

Student Assignment. When you are assigned to students for a particular course section, you will receive mentor access to the course during the period that particular class is active. When your class session ends, depending upon the length of the particular course session, your access ends

as well. "Section" and "class" are used interchangeably to describe the specific group of students enrolled in the course for a specific session. You will be assigned to mentor a particular group of students during the session and your correspondence on the course platform through forums and messages will be limited to your group.

Mentor Preferences. We normally assign each mentor 4 students during a session. If you prefer to accept more students or fewer let us know so we change the assignment criteria. If you are not going to be available to volunteer for a period of time, please let us know so we can set your status to "unavailable." A new feature in our admin system will allow us to suppress emails for mentor calls during the prescribed time period.

Mentor Stipends. You also may tell us of your preference to receive or to decline Mentor Stipends. Currently the Mentor Stipend is $6/student. This payment is intended to help defray any expenses you may have with paying for Internet service or computer maintenance. Stipends are paid twice annually based on the number of students assigned to you during the January thru June and July thru December period. If you want to decline stipends, please contact the CEP Administrator at cep@arrl.org.

Passing Students/Updating Student Records. Mentors will have access to update student records through the ARRL website on this page: www.arrl.org/mentor-student-list. You'll want to bookmark this page in your "Favorites" menu. When a new class section opens, the student's status is listed as "incomplete." This mentor-student list page is where you can "pass" a student by changing the student status from "incomplete" to "instructor pass, "inactive" or "failed."

Graduation and Certificates of Completion. The CEP Administrator reviews the "instructor passes" regularly, updates the status to "Pass" and sends a "Graduation" email to the student, which includes a link to access the student course history page where he/she can print a certificate. Certificates are also mailed to students who have completed courses within 4-6 weeks.

Introducing Yourself

1) At the start of a course session post a paragraph providing some basic information about your background in the "Introduce Yourself" forum in the course.

2) When you receive your students' names and contact information, you are expected to initiate contact, **within a day or two of the start of the course session**.

It is very important to establish a relationship with your students immediately, to engage your students in the course and to set the tone for your interaction. Long experience has shown that a standard letter of introduction works well to start the contact process. A successful letter of introduction (*a sample is included at the end of this document*) is unique to each mentor, but this example is a good starting point, covering the most important information you will want to include in your own message. You can send this letter via the Moodle platform using the "People" block. Select all of the participants in your group and the "send to all" feature.

Use the model letter as a start, but modify it to suit your own style. It is very useful to add a note at the beginning of your letter telling the student that it's important to READ this letter. Many students don't bother unless you emphasize the importance. Also, you may want to end the letter with a bullet point summary of the important points. It is important to emphasize that completing the activities and submitting them to you is an integral part of completing the course. You may want to post a summary of these important points in the Discussion Forum in the course where it will be available to all of your students throughout the course session.

We recommend that you get a phone number from each student because there will be times when there is no other way to make contact. Students have dropped out of contact for major illnesses, extended deployments for emergencies Hurricane Katrina, or family problems severe enough to distract them from completing the course. Students have paid to take the course, so we want to help them however we can to maximize their chances of completing it successfully. A phone number helps you get in contact in unusual circumstances.

Getting Organized

The key to being an effective mentor isn't just technical competence, but also preparation and organization.

First, make sure your computer system and your workspace are ready. A comfortable chair, properly positioned for your keyboard/mouse along with an easy to read screen are important for your comfort. You should have space around your computer for reference materials, the class roster, student activity summary, and your reference book (described below). Your Internet connection should be reliable since you will be checking into the course platform frequently. Make sure you have updated your Internet Explorer or Firefox browser to the most recent version. These are the browsers recommended on the Moodle platform. We have found that the Safari browser does function reasonably well with the Moodle platform, but it is not one of the browsers that is specifically supported by Moodle. Enable pop-ups from moodle.org, check out your screen settings for best viewing of the course content and install/update Flash so you will have access to the audio and video files in the course. Instructions about this are provided for you and for students in the opening topics of the course.

Your computer system should have ample free space available to accommodate the storage of the messages you receive and send. You might also want to have a spreadsheet program such as Excel to record student progress.

Do take measures to protect your computer and your files since WE as a community don't want to lose you. This means virus protection, but it also means things like backups. Don't let yourself get caught without a fall back position. Back up your files in some way, whether it is to paper or to a separate disc or drive. All activity on the Moodle platform is backed up but we ask that students also be responsible to save copies of any homework activities they upload to you. Sometimes students are unable to complete a course and want to re-enroll later. We won't be able to retrieve their work from a previous session. We are not asking you to be responsible for back-ups of student work but it can be helpful if you back up a record of your students' progress in the course.

As we've stated, organization is very important to successful mentoring. You need to have an organized way to track each student and respond quickly and efficiently. Learning to use your email program well is an important step to making yourself efficient. For example, use folders and rules to automatically keep all student communications together in one place.
One way to go is to create a folder with the course and section number, e.g. EC-001-24192. Place copies of the registration notification, your letter of introduction, and any other correspondence with your students in this folder. Thunderbird, Outlook, and Outlook Express are three examples of programs that have this capability. Some online email systems such as Gmail have ways to do something similar. Learn about how you can use whatever program you use to work efficiently. You'll be glad you did.

Some mentors also find it very useful to create a folder or print out student activities for each course Learning Unit/Topic. This information can be placed stored electronically in a document folder or as hard copy in a ring binder that has a set of numbered dividers. This makes it much easier to get to a particular activity for reference. This is a handy place to also store unique and/or creative responses you receive.

Another very handy trick is to have a collection of standard phrases and responses you can use just by cutting and pasting into an email or to provide feedback on activities. You can keep these in a WORD document so you can spell and grammar-check them easily. When you need something, just copy it from the collection and paste it into the reply.

Tracking Student Progress

If you use the Moodle platform asking all of your students to submit their work to you via the platform you can organize all homework activities there. You can record completion of activities using the grading tool so you can easily track student progress by viewing or downloading a report on each of your student's progress at any time. At the conclusion of the session you can do a final download to serve as your record of each student's progress in the course.

Viewing Student Assignments. On the Moodle platform, when you open the link for each homework activity you'll discover whether there are any student assignments waiting for you. You can click on the link to open a list of your students with links to any homework files they have submitted. Then click on "grade" to supply feedback and mark the assignment "complete" or "incomplete."

Tracking Student Assignments. Even with only a few students in a section, keeping track of student activities can be complicated. You will need to keep a checklist of the activities each student has submitted so you can see what the student has yet to do. Moodle makes this easy for you if you update each activity as it is completed by each student using the "grade" function in the Moodle platform. An option to mark homework activities as "complete" or "incomplete" is provided for each activity. This will enable you to view and export a "grader report" showing the status of each assignment for each student in your group. Students will also be able to see a

report showing which activities you have marked as complete. See the Moodle instructions for mentors for more details on using these features.

Alternatively, some mentors keep a paper checklist in a notebook or day planner, or an Excel spreadsheet, and others simply rely on sorting the email messages in a folder by sender to check what assignments have been submitted and which haven't. Students don't always follow directions about putting the lesson information in the subject line of an email, so the last option doesn't always work, but again, if it works for you, then do it.

Some mentors include the following in a spreadsheet for each person:

- Name and Call Sign
- Email Address
- Phone Number
- Check for sending the letter of introduction (record the date it was sent)
- Check for each required activity (record the date received)
- Space for the student's final assessment score
- Check for updating the student's final status in the CEP database through the ARRL Mentor page

If you'd like to use the sample Excel template we've prepared, you can download it from our website on this page http://www.arrl.org/mentoring-online-courses. Open the accordion link for "tracking spreadsheet template." Place the names of each student across the top. List the Topics that have activities that you need to review down the left side of the paper or spreadsheet. You can write the date you received a satisfactory activity for each one. Don't forget a row for the final assessment score, and the date you updated the student's record at the end of the session.

You don't need to use Excel ... all you need is a way to organize what you're doing. You can keep your records on paper, in an application like a word processor, or any other way that you can assure yourself that you know where each student is and can confirm that they've completed all requirements for graduation.

Whichever way you choose, it's very important to develop a way to keep track of what the students are sending you. You'll need to record each student's final assessment results. You'll need to look for final assessment scores on Moodle by viewing the "grades" report and capture the score in whatever record keeping document you've developed.

Allocate some time every day to check email and respond to students. Expect to get 1-2 messages per day per class for most courses. Respond the same day or the next day if at all possible. If you're dealing with a question that will take some time to respond to, or if you just don't have time to send a full reply, it's best to send a reply which says "I'll have to get back to you," than to wait until you know the answer. Warn students if you're going to be gone and you know ahead of time. If you can't, and something unexpected happens, let them know as soon as possible and apologize. They deserve your best efforts. That's what we're here for.

Monitoring Progress/ Time Management

End of topic quiz results are not recorded in the course, so your only real indication of progress by your students is activities submitted for review. The only grade in the course is the final assessment score. The highest score of two allowed attempts is reported. Any single attempt with a score >=80% is acceptable for graduation ,as long as all required student activities have also been completed to your satisfaction.

It helps to send reminder notes throughout the class such as the halfway point, when there are 2 weeks left, and again when only 1 week remains before the end of the class. You can use the message feature built into the Moodle platform to send messages to all of your students or you can select individual students for a more personalized message. Encourage students to continue, remind them that it's a self-paced course, and offer your help if they have any problems or concerns. One of the persistent problems with all online courses is getting people to finish the course. Thirty to 50 percent of students don't finish any given course. An encouraging note may help to get a student back on track or to elicit an explanation to explain any problems the student is confronting in finishing the course. The ARRL is hoping that mentors will use the phone number for a student who is not responding to make contact early if needed. Your stipend for mentoring should cover your telephone expenses.

Course Extension Policy

If a student notifies you (a week or more prior to the "official" closing date) that he or she is unable to complete all the requirements by that time and requests an extension you will need to decide if you can accommodate him/her and the student must notify us before the scheduled session end date. If a situation occurs that requires a significant extension that you cannot accommodate contact the CEP Administrator for guidance. *Please note:* unlike our former online learning platform, on the Moodle platform, student enrollments will close out on the scheduled end date of the course, so if a student needs an extension it is very important to notify us in advance of the session end date if an extension is necessary.

Course Completion Requirements

Depending on the specific course you are mentoring, the requirements for completion of activities may vary. In order to complete the course successfully a student must:

1. Complete satisfactorily any activities which are required to be submitted to the mentor
2. Achieve a score of 80% or greater on any single attempt to take the final assessment

Be sure that you check the activities for each learning unit to see which activities require your review. This varies from course to course. A few courses have no requirements for specific activities to be shared with the mentor. In this case you are to assist the student with any questions they have as they study the material.

Maintaining Student Records in the CEP Database

A list of all students you are mentoring or have mentored is on your personal mentor page in the CEP database, which is located on the ARRL website at www.arrl.org/mentor-student-list. When a new class section opens, the student's status is listed as "Incomplete." At the end of the course session, you will need to report the status of each student to ARRL. You will have access to a link on the mentor student list page at www.arrl.org/mentor-student-list for 2 weeks following the close of a course session.

It is important that you stay in contact with your students as they near completion of the course so you will know when they have completed the final assessment. You can then verify their assessment score on the Moodle platform. If the student has not completed all assignments to your satisfaction, you need to notify the student what work remains to be completed. If the student has completed the student activities to your satisfaction and achieved a score of 80% or better on the final assessment, please update the student's record in the CEP database to "instructor passed" promptly. As you can imagine, students are anxious to know that they have successfully completed a course.

If the student has not completed the course work (in spite of several attempts on your part to communicate to the student that the session is ending and their work is not complete) you should update the student's status to "inactive." If the student has not completed the homework activities to your satisfaction and/or has failed the final assessment, please update the student's status to "failed."

We ask that you retain your records of student course activities for at least 6 months following the close of a course session. We do frequently have students return to us after dropping out of a course hoping to continue where they left off. We try to accommodate when possible so any records you can provide may be helpful.

Course Completion: Graduation

When you pass a student, the CEP Administrator will send the student a graduation email with a copy to you. Students who are ARRL full or Guest members have access to their student record in the CEP database to download a course completion certificate on the student course history page at www.arrl.org/student-course-history. The CEP office will also routinely (every 4-6 weeks) mail certificates for course completions to all students, members and non-members, who have successfully completed courses.

Student Conduct and Ethics Policy

We've developed some very basic rules for student conduct and expectations for ethical conduct. You can review these policies on our website at: www.arrl.org/policies-for-online-courses. These policies are also put in front of students when they register for our courses.

There is no problem with collaboration among students enrolled in a course at the same time, whether a husband and wife, father/son, etc. We think it is healthy for a team to read a lesson and talk together about the subsequent exercise, and even to discuss in detail their approach to their answers. However, each member of the team is enrolled as a student and will pass (or not pass) the course by submitting their own response to the assigned activity. We expect different

answers from each student. We expect each student to put their own independent words down in response to an exercise, even if those words point in a similar direction. But, other than that, they should feel free to collaborate as any two hams might collaborate. If you are receiving responses that are identical to another student's or that clearly plagiarize someone else's work, you can call the student on the issue and request that the exercise be reworked and resubmitted, or you can contact the CEP Administrator to advise us of the situation.

Course Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Our policy on withdrawals and refunds is posted on our website along with our Student Ethics policy and Student and Mentor Expectations: www.arrl.org/policies-for-online-courses.   Please be familiar with these polices.

Staying Current with Course Content

It's important for mentors to be current on course content since corrections and updates are made to the course material on a regular basis. Each course has a regular review and update scheduled where major changes are made. In addition, minor corrections are often made as problems are found in course operation. If you are working from your notes from an older version of the course, you might find that students are working from different material than you are.

Even if you're mentoring the course on a regular basis, it makes it easier and faster for you to provide good feedback if you've recently reviewed the course material. The Continuing Education Program has no formal requirements for review—you don't have to pass an examination or retake the course. We rely on you to keep your own knowledge current. When mentors don't keep current on the material, it usually results in reports from students about the problem, which could result in your being dropped from the mentor program.

To refresh your knowledge, we recommend as a minimum:

1. Review the latest version of the material. Look especially for any differences from the last time you mentored. The CEP Administrator can arrange for you to have access to the online course for you to get familiar with the current content.

2. Review each Topic's activities. After all, these are what your students will submit to you and you need to know what to expect. Don't get caught criticizing a student's work for something left out when it has actually been deleted from the online course, or not recognizing an important element that may have been added, and could show up as part of an activity.

3. Take the final exam or at least all of the unit quizzes (those multiple choice questions at the end of each topic). The unit quizzes are probably more valuable since you get instant feedback from your answer choices, allowing you to quickly confirm that you know the answer.

If you have not been mentoring students for a while and would like to refresh your knowledge of course material prior to taking student assignments, contact the CEP Administrator at cep@arrl.org to request access the course so that you can review the material.

Contact Information

Please be sure to keep your contact information in your member profile at ARRL current. You can manage this directly through the "edit your profile" link on the ARRL website.

Mentor Guide Improvements

This Guide is intended to outline your responsibilities as an ARRL CEP Mentor and to help you get organized to be as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any comments or suggestions, send them by e-mail to cep@arrl.org.

Thanks for all your efforts to make this program a success!

Sample Letter of Introduction

Dear [student name and call sign],

Welcome to the [course name] online course. I'm your Mentor, [your name], [your call sign]. I hope you'll take the time to read this letter in its entirety so you'll know what to expect from me, and you'll understand the process we'll be using to communicate during this course.

[Add some description of yourself here. This is a good place to say something about your experience and why you are a mentor for this course.]

To help me understand your interest, I'd appreciate receiving your response to the following questions. You can post your response in the "Introduce Yourself" iin the online forum in the course where others in this group can get to know you too.
> 1. How long have you been a licensed ham and what are your main interests in amateur radio?
> 2. What is your objective in taking this course?

Mentors are assigned to students to review and approve student assignments, offer guidance if needed, keep an eye on student progress, and answer any questions you might have. You must complete all of the assigned activities in the course to my satisfaction and pass the final assessment with a score of 80% or better to receive a course completion certificate. I will be keeping track of your progress and will advise ARRL when you have satisfactorily met all of the course requirements.

My email address is [xxxx@aaa.jjj]. I can also be reached by phone at [xxx xxx-xxxx]. As a rule I'll get back to you with a response to your questions or homework activities within [2-3 business days]. If you don't hear from me, don't hesitate to follow up to make sure that your message wasn't overlooked. There are occasions in which it is useful to be able to contact a student by phone. If you are comfortable doing so, please send me your telephone number in the event that a phone call might be the most effective means of communication. If you need to get in touch with me on short notice please feel free to call or send me an email (*provide details on preferred times*).

The Moodle course platform provides several ways for us to communicate. Everyone in your student group will see the comments your post to the "Introduce Yourself" forum and the "Discussion Forum." You can also communicate directly with me or with other students in the course using the "People" block on the platform. You'll find a list of participants to select from and a menu to send a message.

Each lesson topic in the course includes student homework. Each activity that needs my review will tell you directly to "Discuss it with your mentor," or something similar. You can send you homework activities from within the Moodle course platform. Just click on the link provided for student activities on each topic. You'll be able to upload a document with your work. I'll supply feedback and mark the activity "complete." The Moodle system will send me an email when you have posted your homework. When you submit activities, please put your name and the activity in the subject line of your message. You aren't my only student, so this will help me keep everything straight and help me respond quicker. A typical subject line might be "Bob Jones-Intro to Emcomm, Topic 5a activity 1" when you are submitting activity 1 from Topic 5a. Please add the same subject line information inside the attachment so I can see it when I have it open for review.

[I'll be keeping track of your homework on the Moodle platform so you will be able to see which assignments I have marked as complete and which ones you have yet to do.] **or** [I'll be keeping track of your homework outside of the Moodle platform so don't be alarmed if the Grade report you see there doesn't include the homework you have submitted.]

From time to time you may find questions or answers that are confusing or that you disagree with. Please make a note of these, because we're glad to hear about them. The course is being updated and revised periodically to reflect input from students and mentors. Don't send these comments to me as you take the course. You will have a chance to include them in the course evaluation form at the end of the course.

This course affords you the opportunity to try some things you may never have done before. Have fun with it, jump into the activities with a sense of adventure and don't worry if something doesn't work for you the first time. I hope you enjoy the course, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very best,
[your name and call sign]