Mentoring

MAGAZINE

NPQLTD

A SPOTLIGHT ON WHAT IT IS LIKE FROM A MENTOR COMPLETING IT

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Haili Hughes   @HUGHESHAILI

Happy 2023 everyone! Hasn't it been a crazy one so far? The first couple of months seems to have gone by in a blur and like many, I am just about keeping my head above water.

In both of my jobs and as an independent mentoring consultant, I am privileged to visit hundreds of schools a year and work with lots of brilliant mentors. Mentors really are the un-sung heroes in schools and on top of often full teaching timetables, they still manage to support our new entrants to the profession. This magazine really, is a thank you for everything that you do - we appreciate you!

This issue is packed full of really interesting and informative articles, from school leaders, those working in ITTE and mentors themselves. There is also a piece on some incredible research on video coaching in the US and some tips for how we can use video to enhance our mentoring support. Mentors have so much wisdom to share, so if you are interested in contributing to a future issue, please so get in touch at haili.hughes@outlook.com. Happy reading!

Contributors

Toria Bono

Toria Bono is a primary teacher, coach and the coaching lead in her school. She is the host of the educational podcast Tiny Voice Talks Education and the author of Tiny Voices Talk – Education, Engagement, Empowerment.

Neil Mullen

Neil is a passionate and innovative SEN Teacher with experience in a wide range of special schools and specialist provision over 10 years. He has a keen interest in academic research in SEND. In his current and previous roles, Ihe has researched and implemented innovative assessment, learning and teaching methods as well as mentored colleagues and ECTs. He has undertaken a course with Education Training Foundation on mentoring as well as currently completing his ILM L5 Coaching and Mentoring qualification. He is keen to further develop his mentoring/coaching experiences through observation and sharing within the community of practice

Dom Shibli

Dom is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Herts in Secondary Science. He is a #cogscisci contributor.

Henry Sauntson

Henry is a SCITT Director and Senior Leader, a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and a CollectivEd Fellow. He facilitates the ECF and NPQ. He is an SLE and school governor.

Contributors

Zoe Watson

Zoe Watson is an Assistant Headteacher at Nower Hill High School in Harrow. She has responsibility for Early Career Development, supporting ITT, Early Career Teacher Induction and a Year 3 teacher development programme in the school. She passionately believes that the new teachers that she works with can all share something that she can learn. Zoe came to Science teaching as a second career, following time as a Senior Research Scientist and this interest in research impacts her engagement towards innovation in the classroom.

Liam Anderson

Liam is the head of a design and technology department in a large comprehensive school in West Berkshire, where he has been teaching since completing teacher training in 2015. He has mentored both student teachers and NQTs/ECTs for the past five years, has delivered sessions for D&T student teachers at the University of Reading and has also been involved in delivering a range of CPD for teachers on design education for the Design Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum. Liam has also written a book chapter on professional development for the 4th edition of 'Learning to teach design and technology in the secondary school' and blog posts for those involved in initial teacher training/education for the Design and Technology Teacher Education Group blog.

Helen Barker

Helen Barker is Teacher Assessment Manager at the Chartered College of Teaching and oversees the design and moderation of assessments of the Chartered pathways.

Helen King

Helen King has been a secondary science teacher at Branston Community Academy for the last 10 years, and has recently been promoted to an assistant HOD.

Contributors

Oliver Wright

Oliver Wright is the sector manager for Senior Leadership at Twinkl. He lives in Sheffield and before joining Twinkl, worked in primary schools in Sheffield and Derbyshire for over 20 years. His experience ranges from large city schools to small Peak District schools, including 8 years of headship in two very different schools. He still misses so many aspects (but not all!) of the job. Oliver's focus has always been on helping others to develop and that's something he enjoys continuing at Twinkl. As well as headship, he's been a school governor, a specialist leader in education and been involved in initial teacher training.

Rosie Booker

Rosie is an English Teacher, Second in Department and deputy Professional Tutor at a secondary school in Norfolk. She is an experienced mentor and coach who thrives with supporting others as they progress through all stages of this wonderful career path of teaching, and is passionate about CPD, both leading and for her own personal development. She is currently Mentoring Associate for Litdrive. Her prior MA research focused on oracy and reading comprehension and this continues to be an ongoing focus.

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THE INSPIRATION PROFESSION

Toria Bono

If you are reading this, you are probably working in education and your role probably touches the lives of young people. Are you aware though, of the immense power that you have?

You have the power to build confidence, cultivate belief and create our future leaders. You also have the power to demoralise and destroy dreams. Now no one goes into education to do the latter but if I look back at my childhood, that is what many teachers did. They weren't 'that teacher' they were 'those teachers'.

I remember being told once that teachers make the weather in our classroom and leaders make the weather in our schools. That is so true. When someone is having a bad day, it can often ripple outwards and impact on those they come into contact with. From a teacher's point of view, that is all the young people they teach that day.

I became a teacher not because I had loved the teachers who had taught me and wanted to emulate them, it was quite the opposite really.

I didn't want any child to be taught the way I had been and I wanted to be the teacher that I had needed. When I look back at my childhood and school life, I had wanted teachers to see me, believe in me and give me the courage that I lacked – two teachers did this, but the rest didn't. That is a lot of teachers who didn't.

'That teacher' is the teacher who makes the time to know their children/ pupils. Now I know that in primary that is a lot easier than in secondary, but it isn't impossible for a secondary teacher to recognise the uniqueness of each student they teach. No child is the same and 'that teacher' recognises that. We can't label children or put them in pigeon-holes, we have to identify their individual strengths and needs and play to those.

In my book 'Tiny Voices Talk', a number of the contributors talk about moving beyond labels and ensuring that we are 'teaching the able and not the label'. This can be hard, especially if you have a number of students going in and out of your classroom every day, but 'that teacher' makes the time to do just that.

In my introduction, I mentioned 'those teachers' and they are often the ones who use sarcasm or crushing comments. When I was revising for my GCSE chemistry exam, I was struggling to understand the calculations that I was required to do, so I went to my teacher to ask for help. I remember breathing in deeply before entering the room and mustering up every bit of confidence I had. I knocked on the door, went in and asked if she could give me some extra help in those areas. Her response was 'Frankly Victoria, you are beyond help.' I quite literally had no response. What do you reply to a comment like that? She didn't give me the help that I asked for and it was the 'Lett's Chemistry Guide' that enabled me to pass that exam. Imagine – a book was of more use than a teacher!

Over the years, I have come across many teachers, both as a pupil and a teacher, who use sarcasm with young people. The problem is, that developmentally children don't really understand sarcasm until the ages of 9-10 and some never do (it can be lost on those who are neurodiverse).

Difficulties with interpreting sarcasm can lead to misunderstandings and social exclusion. One of 'those teachers' that I had often used sarcasm and I never quite knew whether he was being serious. I remember that one of my worst punishments at school was when I had tried being sarcastic back. For some reason, even though he was comfortable with giving sarcastic comments, he wasn't happy receiving them.

'That teacher' respects the young people in their care and the way that they interact with their students demonstrates that. I try to greet every child as they enter the classroom each day and ask them how they are. Again, this is probably easier in primary than in secondary, but I find that small interaction with each child tells me so much. A lot can happen in a child's morning prior to coming to school each day and sometimes they need help to regulate before they can even think about learning. Many children have 'tells' and I find that when I am greeting them each day I can identify if they need a moment to breathe and relax before heading into the lessons that lie ahead. One child I taught used to come in with her hair beautifully done if it was a good morning and her hair down if it had been a bad morning. This was usually because she had had an argument with mum and this sometimes resulted in no breakfast. She needed time to eat and regulate when her hair was down and soon she was ready to enter the day – she often put her hair up at this point.

Think for a moment about your childhood. Who were the teachers that you would place in the column of 'that teacher' and who would you label as 'those teachers'? What was it that 'that teacher' gave you or did for you? Was it what they said or how they acted? What about 'those teachers'? What was it about their behaviour that you didn't like? Often, by identifying the characteristics we like and don't like in others, we can ensure that we are the teacher that we want to be and that our children deserve.

You can follow Toria on Twitter @Toriaclaire

"Be that teacher – the teacher that your students need. Remember, you make the weather in your classroom and you have the power to build confidence, cultivate belief and create our future leaders."

Linking this to Teacher Standards

As a mentor, you may want to have some discussions with your ECT/trainee about the professional responsibilities we have as teachers. These descriptors from the CCF and ECF in Standard 1 might help:

1. Teachers have the ability to affect and improve the wellbeing, motivation and behaviour of their pupils.
2. Teachers are key role models, who can influence the attitudes, values and behaviours of their pupils.
3. Teacher expectations can affect pupil outcomes; setting goals that challenge and stretch pupils is essential.
4. Setting clear expectations can help communicate shared values that improve classroom and school culture.
5. A culture of mutual trust and respect supports effective relationships.
6. High-quality teaching has a long-term positive effect on pupils' life chances, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

DESIGNING A TEACHER MENTOR CURRICULUM USING A 'STRAND' MODEL CURRICULUM APPROACH

PART 1
BY DOM SHIBLI

This is the first of two articles about mentoring at the University of Hertfordshire. We designed a curriculum for our teacher mentors which we called the Mentor Professional Learning Programme (MPLP) which aims to improve the quality of conversation between the teacher mentor and student teacher and aid their progress towards meeting the teachers standards by the end of the course.

It started in September 2022 and has been delivered through synchronous, asynchronous and face to face training. We started designing the curriculum by identifying the attributes of mentors as expert teachers who:

- Have excellent subject knowledge and expertise
- Understand how people learn
- Demonstrate excellent pedagogical choices when teaching and can break down concepts into manageable chunks
- Build nurturing relationships with student teachers based on trust

Effective mentors are interested in the evidence base that underpins student teacher development. For example, student teachers are often overwhelmed by the amount of simultaneous activity in a classroom (Feldon, 2007) which can be explained with an understanding of cognitive load theory and the limited capacity of the working memory. Typically, new student teachers hold naïve views about what teachers do and why (Kennedy, 2016) because their knowledge of how to teach is not as well-organised and fluent as an expert (Berliner, 2001). Good mentors understand that student teachers' professional development is not linear, it can jump, stagnate, or plateau and, therefore, different approaches to mentoring are required at different points throughout the year.

Our Mentor Professional Learning Programme (MPLP) is informed by the evidence base for high-quality teacher development so that mentors learn the skills they need to guide the student teacher in their journey from novice to Early Career Teacher.
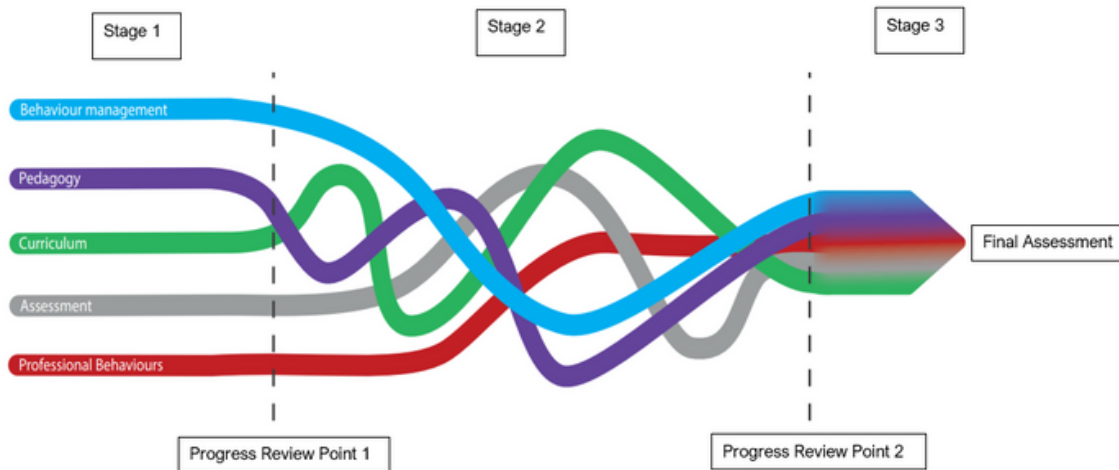
Figure 1: the strand curriculum model to demonstrate the student teacher professional learning journey from novice to Early Career Teacher

To aid the visualisation of a student teacher's development and progress throughout the year we devised the 'Strand' curriculum model. The five core areas of practice of the Core Content Framework are the five strands which student teachers see as separate in the first stage of training (term one). But as the student teachers knowledge, understanding and ability to enact the five core areas of practice develops the strands intertwine which represents the integrated nature of teaching.

The 'Strand' model can help support the types of mentoring that a teacher mentor might undertake across the three stages of the student teachers' education and mentoring might look like this:

Stage 1

The Teacher Mentor takes on the role of the expert who is best placed to diagnose the change that a student teacher should make and to describe those practices in a way that makes it easy for the student teacher to implement them effectively. This might involve co-planning, co-teaching, rehearsal or revisiting the foundational components of teaching in a low stakes environment. The mentor must identify specific fine grain behaviours needed to change that a student teacher can easily enact, which is then supported by a cycle of observation and feedback.

Stage 2

When the student teacher is starting to know more, remember more, and is able to do more, then the role of the mentor should evolve so that the student teacher takes a more active role in their development. A mentor and student teacher will work together closely to maintain the observation and feedback cycle. An effective mentor will ask probing questions to help the student teacher solve a classroom problem or improve an aspect of practice. The Teacher Mentor will support the student teacher to make changes by deconstructing and critiquing approaches, using in-class observation, modelling, or analysis of video to understand what might make it successful or unsuccessful.

Stage 3

In the final stage, a facilitative approach may be desirable to develop student teacher agency, with a gradual release of responsibility from the mentor to the mentee (Pylam, 2016). Effective mentors will take an adaptive approach, considering the personalised needs of their student teacher. They will recognise that student teachers will not navigate the training in a linear fashion and, as a mentor, they will be able to adjust their approach to mentoring, switching between the different approaches.

For example, in stage 3 the student teacher's behaviour management skills may be such that the mentor's role is more like a facilitator. Where a student teacher may be teaching outside of their subject specialism a consequence of this may mean that the mentor may need to be much more explicit in their approach, more akin to the way they were working in stage 1.

References

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In each stage, an effective mentor will provide structured feedback, using the best evidence available to provide a systematic process for improving the student teacher's practice. This evidence-informed approach aligns closely with our Partnership Vision to develop teachers with agency and professional voice, who articulate how research has informed their practice. The Mentor Professional Learning Programme has been designed to develop mentors who:

- establish a professionally supportive relationship with their mentee
- help mentees to be critically reflective and become independent professionals
- model that they are continually learning and developing expertise.

In the next article we will write about how the 'Strand' model has been received by teacher mentors and offer perspectives from primary and secondary colleagues.

You can follow Dom on Twitter at @ShibliDom

THE POWER OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

PERSONAL REFLECTION

BY HENRY SAUNTSON

First impressions count; you only get one chance to make them, after all. It must never be forgotten that ITE is a process of training and education, supported by a range of expertise and many a guiding hand.

So much of a pre-service teacher's initial development is founded on the quality of the professional and personal relationships they form, and the way they are supported into acclimatizing themselves into often very new and daunting settings.

There has been much debate over many years about the power of dialogue as a tool for the effective facilitation of pre-service teacher development. Hans-Georg Gadamer argued that successful communication requires that interlocutors share a common language. Gadamer felt that what makes 'coming to an understanding' possible is language, which provides the 'mitte', the middle ground, the place where understanding happens. For Gadamer, language becomes the 'vermittlung', the communicative mediation which establishes common ground. Gadamer stressed that the ground is not established by any explicit 'social contract' or agreement that can be negotiated in advance, nor by any psychological processes such as empathy or sympathy; it rests instead on a willingness of the participants in conversation to lend themselves to the emergence of something new – the subject matter that manifests in conversation.

As Director of a SCITT, I know that my pre-service teachers rely heavily on the quality of the mentorship they receive and that, often were issues between Mentor and Mentee arise, they are because of an inconsistency of expectation on either side of the formative dialogue – something which can be anticipated and off-set early on through clarity and definition of roles, but also through a diagnosis and – if necessary – therapy of feedback literacy on the part of both; can the Mentor give appropriate, targeted and formative feedback and, perhaps more importantly, can the pre-service teacher take this feedback and work with it?

In a fascinating and informative piece of research, Connolly et al (2020) investigated the power of scripted 'first meetings' between Mentor and mentee to, in their words, 'create a more constructive relationship and, further down the line, help to attenuate retention problems'. Now, as providers of Initial Teacher Education we know that we cannot be too prescriptive for in-school Mentors

lest we disable their autonomy and agency, but we can certainly offer advice and scaffolds for conversations; there are so many ways in which a Mentee can 'get it wrong' in the first encounter, from simple things like over-familiarity or informality bred out of nervousness or, at the other end of the scale, demonstrations of a lack of professional understanding and the values of the profession.

I would argue, as do Connolly et al, that there is great benefit to be sourced from a more carefully designed initial encounter; it is far easier for everyone to be on the same page, for example, if said page actually exists. We know also that Mentors are more than just models – they are what Hobson & Malderez referred to as 'acculturators', helping their charges settle in to new environments; they are 'psychological supporters', offering the pre-service teacher pastoral support and guidance also.

The research then carries a number of insights and implications for practice; providers of ITE can enhance the alignment and calibration of their curriculum and vision across the many settings in which it is enacted by focussing on the formative elements of mentor/mentee relationships, and thereby creating a blueprint of conditions from which that relationship can develop.

Furlong & Maynard (1993) argued that pre-service teacher development happens in five clear stages, each with their own focal concerns; not a template but certainly a model to be aware of! Stage 1 in their model is what they termed 'Early Idealism' – the pre-service teacher wants to identify with their students and also emulate the very teachers who taught them and inspired them into the profession; sometimes these ideals are out of keeping with the situational realities, and therefore close and careful support is needed from the outset – if the Mentor / Mentee relationship has started badly then this Stage is harder to navigate.

Back to Connolly et al – 'a useful and effective set of questions could be developed and used by mentors and mentees'; 'thinking about these initial encounters can impact the way a mentor and mentee goes on to build a relationship. In essence, that first encounter is the opportunity for the alignment of the various influential factors and manifestors of the educative experience – pre-service teacher, in-school Mentor and provider ethos, all aligned under a central understanding born out of clarity and communication. Connolly et al posit that the initial encounter questions reflect elements of Lave & Wenger's 'communities of practice', where professional learning is a process of socialization – the pre-service teacher carefully inducted into the existing cultures of the setting; they also focus on the power of the questions to open that essential dialogue, promote participation and '"brokering" the mentee to their professional community by establishing and addressing boundaries, conflicts of interest and practices'.

We know the power of questions – they elicit understanding, strengthen knowledge, offer opportunities for practice and rehearsal, and in doing so create strong conceptual frameworks and boundaries in which we can operate – a pre-service teacher needs both examples and non-examples to help strengthen those boundaries in which they can safely develop their practice. To quote the authors again – 'a trainee teacher cannot move towards participatory appropriation because without the knowledge acquired by asking these sort of questions, the mentor can have little idea of where the trainee sits within the teaching community'.

The questions promulgated by the research address key areas such as pre-service teacher motivation, time-management, expectations, self-efficacy and experience, but also subtler areas of importance such as communication boundaries, personal interests and social concerns. Although many providers – I speak for us all from my own experience here – will elicit much of this information through the application and interview processes, as well as provider-led induction, this Mentor-led model also allows for the crystallization of personalities within diverse educational settings – context is king, after all. Sometimes the most nerve-wracking thing for any pre-service teacher in a new setting is where to park, where (or where not!) to sit in the Department office and whether or not they need to bring their own mug. Having sat in my first ever INSET at my new school fully-clad in a suit when everyone else was in jeans and t-shirts, I know that I would have benefited from asking the right sort of questions and, more importantly, having them answered.

You can follow Henry on Twitter at @HenrySauntson

Further reading

Connolly, S., Bates, G. and Shea, J. (2020), ""First meetings": constructive first encounters between pre-service teachers and their mentors", International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 411-426

Zoe Watson - Nower Hill High School

LESSONS FROM OUR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

Early in the Autumn term of 2021, when discussing how well the new Early Career Teachers (ECTs) were settling into school with the Headteacher, I made a throw away comment about their grasp of pedagogy as part of the discussion. I was asked how well the new Early Career Framework was working as part of their induction and what it meant for their workload. I confidently told the Head that our ECTs could talk about the learning and pedagogy in their classrooms more confidently than some of our more experienced colleagues. "In fact", I stated, "I'm sure that they could teach most of us something new." The Head took me at my word, asking me to prepare the small cohort of four ECTs to deliver a training session to the whole school in the summer term. Challenge accepted!

When I next spoke to our ECTs, and told them what I had agreed to, initially they were nervous. Very quickly the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session looming on the horizon became a useful framework for our discussions. When we met they would talk to me about the training that they received from our induction provider and how they were implementing this into their own practice. We started to talk about what they had found especially useful and whether or not they saw their colleagues doing the same things when they observed lessons. Framing their feedback in this way really helped to crystallise and support the benefits of the training that they were receiving. It also reinforced my belief that our ECTs could teach us all something new and useful. They started to believe that too.

I won't downplay the time and effort that this group of new teachers put into preparing the 25 minutes of CPD that they ended up delivering. The four of them met several times, often with me there too. Through the thread of discussion about what they would deliver, who would speak first, how to make sure that teaching staff were active within the session, were rich conversations about classroom practice, relationships with students, routines and learning. The ECTs started to believe that they had something valuable to say and I agreed with them.

The Wednesday morning in June rolled around, the presentation was prepared and they started to feel trepidation. As I stood up to introduce the session, even I was feeling an almost parental nervousness for "my" ECTs.

My slight apprehension was completely unfounded. They stood and delivered ideas about a predictable classroom, routines and the benefits to our SEND students. They described improving their modelling, the tools that they had used and the impact that it had in the classroom. An ECT maths teacher described spending time practising narrating his modelling out loud, then demonstrated in front of an audience of nearly 150. Our media studies ECT gave his examples of maximising learning time. He had complete confidence as he described his progress through the year. Just the use of the phrase "maximising learning time" made a few of his more experienced colleagues sit up a little straighter. Framing the activities within his classroom entirely around the idea of learning shouldn't have been a shock, yet somehow it struck a chord. There were muted laughs when he first mentioned that I had encouraged him to use Iris Connect to review his practice - I had spoken to the staff body frequently about why we were rolling the use of Iris Connect through the school. Yet, as he described recording and reviewing his own practice, making changes and seeing the benefits on video, the message was so much more powerful than any that I had managed to convey.

They sat down to enthusiastic applause, with wide smiles. My "parental" nervousness was completely replaced by pride in their accomplishments. As teachers moved towards registration, many stopped to compliment the ECTs and comment on the fact that there was something that they would try during that day. Surely the highest compliment of all.

Over the next few days, countless staff stopped me in the corridors to make sure that I would pass on their congratulations, to comment on the fact that the future of teaching is bright with ECTs like ours in schools and to let me know "I learnt something!"

Rachel Lofthouse recently spoke about mentoring to a group of Initial Teacher Training Providers. She stated "Experiencing success supports further professional learning and confidence". This statement has been demonstrated following the feedback the ECTs have continued to receive since they delivered the CPD session.

Here are just a few of the comments emailed to them by teachers who took time out of their day to describe the impact the training had on them:

"I just wanted to say how brilliant your CPD was this morning, for me being reminded of those key techniques (which I have a habit of forgetting when running from lesson to lesson) was so valuable. I used lots of the techniques in my afternoon lesson today with Yr7 and it really improved the quality - so thank you.

I also wanted to say a huge thank you for your continuous reference to our students with SEND - it's vital we keep reminding staff about adapting our teaching to meet their needs, so thank you. If this is what you are all doing in Year 1 of teaching - I can't wait to see what your future holds! Huge well done again, it's not an easy task standing up in front of a room full of adults!" (from the SENCO)

"I just wanted to say how impressed I was with your presentation this morning. I also wanted to let you know that it was really helpful that you included clear explicit examples of how you make your practical lessons predictable. Although I have now been teaching Physics for 20+ years, I used a couple of your tips very successfully this afternoon in a core practical my year 10 students were completing." (from the AHT teaching and Learning).

Genuine and honest praise about the impact of the CPD session on more experienced colleagues has filled the ECTs with confidence. More than that, it has encouraged them to have conversations about teaching, to continue to engage with their training and then share what they have learnt. This is a cohort of teachers brimming with confidence yet keen to improve. The students in their lessons are lucky to have them, everyone in the school tells them so.

Bring on this summer's Wednesday morning CPD.

For more information on Nower Hill see www.nowerhill.org.uk.

You can follow Zoe on @Zoeorrw

MENTORING IS A TWO WAY STREET

Liam Anderson

Why be a mentor?

Since January 2018, I have mentored a number of trainee teachers and, more recently, have been mentoring two early career teachers in their first and second year of teaching. In both of these mentoring roles, I have relished the opportunity to support and develop the next generation of teaching talent. It's also given me an opportunity to develop my own skills and practice, not only as an effective mentor, but as an effective teacher.

In the now nearly six years that I have been mentoring teacher colleagues, I have learnt an incredible amount and gained so many new insights and reflections on my teaching practice. I hope to share some of these experiences and why mentoring teacher colleagues is such a valuable and invigorating role for experienced teachers to take on. Whilst at times challenging, the many benefits for professional development are endless.

Benefits for your own career development

Improving mentoring skills

The most obvious aspect of mentoring a trainee teacher or early career teacher (ECT) is the chance it provides for

TODAY ISSUE PRESENTS:

Research

major changes on Earth. We will visit several places of

Among other things will also discuss new measures

experienced teachers to develop their own mentoring and/or coaching skills. When I first mentored a trainee teacher, mentoring was completely new to me and I certainly lacked some of the skills I've built up now. But, by using and being open to ongoing training, both formal and informal, I've been able to grow and develop my mentoring practice. These mentoring/coaching skills are then incredibly practical and applicable to working with colleagues at all levels in schools to support professional development.

Refining professional skills

Mentoring also expands your own professional skills which are assumed to be a 'given' for teachers – but, as with all skills, there's always room to improve and refine them. Learning to actively listen, analyse, give feedback and observe makes a strong mentor, and a strong teacher. As I have honed them so I've become a better mentor and teacher.

Tailoring your teaching practice

So much can be learnt from listening to mentees' ideas and opinions and also seeking their views on their own practice. Learning to listen and read between the lines on their views, values and reflections and in turn adjusting the support and guidance you offer is directly transferable to how we tailor the support we offer each pupil.

Similarly, as a mentor, you need to hone your skills to analyse your mentees' practice and thinking, then share constructive and functional feedback. This analysis can be drawn from literally observing teaching practice, but also from insights and discussions through mentoring/coaching work and conversations. Being able to take these skills and turn them on our own teaching practice, helps us become more rounded teachers, who respond to the needs of a class rather than having a 'one size fits all' approach.

Flexing your leadership abilities

Mentoring also gives a chance to show leadership through working with colleagues on developing their practice. Experienced teachers who may be looking to take up higher level teaching and learning responsibilities can acquire experience and skillsets from mentoring that show their ability to lead and can reference this in applications when applying for leadership roles. It can be an important part of your journey to leadership. As important is finding the next role. For teachers considering the next jump up the career ladder, perhaps even to SLT level, I'd encourage you to take a look at the government's Teaching Vacancies website. It is now the largest source of primary teaching jobs listed directly by schools in England, and the second largest for secondary teaching

jobs. If you're not ready to take the jump, but want to know what opportunities are out there, it's worth signing up for their job alerts.

Keeping your finger on the pulse of teaching pedagogy

The regular formal and informal discussions had between mentor and mentee yields ample opportunities for a mentor to contemplate their own pedagogy and classroom practice and, for me, this has been one of the biggest contributors to my own professional development too.

I have been able to reflect on my own practice as well as that of my mentees to consider what really does make effective practice, what this looks like in the classroom and how we professionally develop with pedagogy and classroom practice. This time to think, reflect and develop in my mentoring role has also encouraged me to read and research more widely around teaching practice and pedagogy to ensure I have the confidence and knowledge to lead and support meaningful and reflective conversations on teaching.

Moving forwards as a mentor

I have always had a love for professional learning; a thirst and eagerness to learn more and grow and this is at the heart of

teacher development and what the ITT and ECT programmes are designed to do and impart on the fresh faces of the teaching profession! The opportunity to mentor both trainees and ECTs gives me the opportunity to fulfill this passion and to support the sector in securing a skilled workforce for the future.

For experienced teachers who are passionate about developing their colleagues and supporting the next generation of teachers, mentoring is a brilliant way to do this. Personally, it is also incredibly rewarding to see trainees and ECTs grow and become more confident classroom teachers and their enjoyment and skill for teaching develop.

If you're considering the next step in your career, visit: teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk

For further advice on developing your skills as a mentor, visit: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-mentors-how-to-support-ecf-based-training

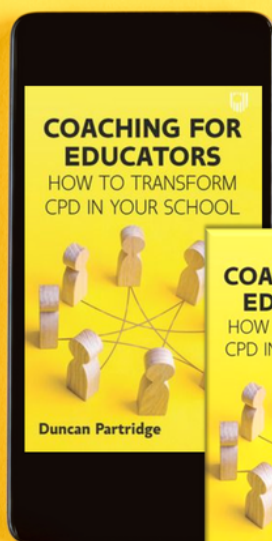# Helen Barker

the power of mentoring

Mentoring has been thrust into the spotlight over the last couple of years. With the roll out of the Early Career Framework and the expectation that new teachers will be mentored throughout their two year induction period, there has been an increased realisation of just how powerful mentoring can be for supporting and developing teachers and therefore, the important role that mentors have in schools.

Of course, mentoring has always been an important part of development for new teachers as they join the profession and we know there is immense value in providing mentoring for mid-career and more experienced teachers too. So, given just how important they are, what are the qualities that make a highly effective mentor?

When we look to the evidence-base to understand what strategies might underpin effective mentoring practice, we see a particular emphasis on: mentors being able to establish effective learning conversations; the importance of the mentor / mentee relationship; suitable goal setting; and growing autonomy for the mentee (CUREE, 2005).

In recognition of the important role that mentors play in supporting teacher development, the Chartered College of Teaching has just launched a brand new professional learning pathway for mentors. The new Chartered Teacher (Mentor) pathway enables mentors to really focus on their learning and development as a mentor and provides certification through accredited CPD leading to the award of Chartered Status.

In this article, the Chartered College of Teaching's Helen Barker, shares some of the evidence around mentor development and how this is reflected in their new Chartered Teacher (Mentor) pathway.

We also know the importance of interpersonal skills, including relationship building, listening, honesty and empathy (Sanyal, 2017). Hobson et al say that mentoring should challenge the mentee, and encourage the mentee to reflect on their practice (Hobson et al, 2009). This is also built on a bedrock of teacher expertise, or what McIntyre and Haggar call "craft knowledge" (McIntyre and Haggar, 2013, p96). This craft knowledge enables mentors to break down their pedagogy into parts, explaining the decisions that they make and the impact that they have. Unravelling teaching into its parts is not always an easy thing to do, but McIntyre and Haggar argue that this helps mentees to see the way that different knowledge, techniques and skills are woven together to form the lesson and learning (McIntyre and Haggar, 2013).

Mentoring is therefore a complex task, requiring the mentor to adapt their support, act as a role model, have high quality teaching knowledge and skills, understand effective mentoring, develop relationships, as well as continually learning and reflecting on their own practice. It's highly skilled and important work. Mentoring is nuanced though, and can look very different in different schools, situations or even between different people.

The importance of effective monitoring is now being recognised by a push towards better quality mentor professional development, and expectations that mentors will be supported in developing their practice. For example, the recent Initial teacher training (ITT) provider guidance states that for the 23/24 academic year general mentors should have 20 hours of initial training time, followed by 6 hours in each subsequent year (DfE, 2022). The goal is for ITT mentors to be "well-trained and expert" (DfE, 2022, p13).

How can Chartered Status help mentors to hone their expertise?

At the Chartered College of Teaching, we've looked closely at the research around effective mentoring to develop our Chartered Teacher (Mentor) Professional Principles. These principles clearly outline the knowledge, practice and behaviours that an expert mentor is likely to hold. The Professional Principles define an aspirational standard for mentors to work towards; they can be used to guide mentors' professional learning, and mentors who can demonstrate they meet this high standard can gain recognition for their expertise by undertaking certified CPD leading to the award of Chartered Status.

Our new Chartered Teacher (Mentor) pathway provides mentors with an opportunity to develop and showcase their expertise by completing four certified CPD units. We recommend that mentors start with the Development of Teaching Practice (Mentor) Award.

About the Development of Teaching Practice (Mentor) Award

In this certified CPD unit, mentors identify an area of their mentoring practice they wish to develop, explore the evidence base around that area, and then apply this evidence within the context of their mentoring practice through cycles of deliberate, purposeful practice.This type of developmental process is backed up by evidence, including from Hobson et al. (2020), who argue that mentors need opportunities to practise mentoring, reflect on their practice and sustain their engagement over time.

Mentors undertaking the Development of Teaching Practice (Mentor) Award can choose any aspect of their mentoring to explore, meaning this CPD can align with mentors' existing priorities or wider programmes they are engaged with. As a result, this process has the potential to be transformative for mentors, and then also positively affect their mentees, students, schools and wider educational communities.

What's next?

At the Chartered College of Teaching, we'll be continuing to talk about and explore mentoring in all its forms, ensuring that mentors are appreciated for the work they are doing to develop not only their own expertise, but also supporting the ongoing development of expertise within our profession.

Our intention is that Chartered Teacher (Mentor) Status will offer mentors a clear professional learning pathway that can help bring greater coherence to their professional learning.

We know how valuable mentors' time is, so the pathway to Chartered Status is designed to be flexible, enabling mentors to complete each of the units alongside existing priorities. We also want to recognise mentors for the work they are already doing, so we offer 'Recognition of Prior Certified Learning' meaning that mentors may receive full or partial exemption from one or more Chartered Status units by receiving credits towards Chartered Status for their wider professional activities, such as mentoring on the Early Career Framework, or completion of NPQs.

You can find out more about Chartered Teacher (Mentor) Status on our website.

We hope that you will join us in raising the profile of mentors and the wider teaching profession.

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Neil Mullen

SELF-REFLECTION & SUPERVISION:

How reflection can inform mentor development

Being an effective mentor not only takes continual practice with mentees and research into new approaches but critically self-reflecting on own practice as well as being supervised by more experienced mentors. Both critical self-reflection and opportunities to talk through areas to develop with more experienced mentors within supervision are crucial to talk through issues within own mentoring contexts and support in areas of development. The opportunity to self-reflect and understand and apply these techniques can also be used within mentoring approach sharing/teaching this ability to self-reflect to mentees.

Self-reflection is a useful, strategic activity for the mentor to engage in, as it prompts deeper level thinking about their role as a support person, their skills and knowledge, and how as a mentor they influence and impact on the mentee's development. Mentors should be engaging within self-reflection practices as self-reflection means you consider an alternative that you can refer to in the future – essentially taking active steps to learn from your own errors. By taking this responsibility for yourself, you can build better and more positive relationships with mentees.

There are a variety of self-reflection templates available with mentoring websites, but it usually involves asking yourself questions surrounding the mentoring sessions that has been conducted.

Key open questions can be written down or simply asked which can foster deeper reflection on what has occurred or what will occur in the next session. Below are a few examples of good self- reflection questions that can be used.

Self – Reflection Effective Questions:

·What are the most important things you can do in your role to help mentee?
·What aspect of the mentoring experience would you change?
·How did you behave, think and feel during the session?
·What choices or activities did you implement 'in the moment'?
·What were the main learning points for you from this coaching experience?
·What did you learn about your coaching?
·What thoughts do you have about the experience now?
·How will you apply this learning to your future coaching?
· What will you do next time?
·What do you need to be (more) aware of?
·What support do you need and from where?

As part of my ongoing ILM Level 5 coaching and mentoring qualification we are required and encouraged to reflect after each mentoring session we do. To help facilitate this we have been given a SOAP reflection template that breaks down what has happened within the session, how you as a mentor felt/thought within the session, what key takeaways you have learned from the session and what you would/wouldn't do again in the next session. From my own experiences of completing these forms – they have been fantastic in terms of deep self- reflection of my mentoring practices. This has been most notably of thinking about my thoughts/feelings and behaviours especially how this has impacted on an approach I may have thought to use or how I was reacting to the mentee within the moment.

These SOAP reflections have allowed me to think and direct my focus towards improving my mentoring practice thus (hopefully!) assisting with mentee's experience within formal mentoring session. The process of self-reflecting has directed me to further areas of research that may help with my practice, new approaches within mentoring as well as mentoring evidence (and its impact) that can be applied to mentees I am currently working with.

I usually complete these SOAP reflections ideally 1 hour after a mentoring session. Self-reflecting in this time frame allows for good and powerful reflecting on how the session had gone, what mentoring techniques had been used and why it had been selected as well as what is needed to further develop within the next mentoring session. If a mentoring session is reflecting the next day or even later this can lead to missing out on key information from mentoring session or as well as bias/rose tinted lens. Additionally, these SOAP reflections have guided my analysis of practice to reach out for Supervision from more experienced mentors.

Mentor coaching/supervision is a formal process of professional support, which ensures continuing development of the coach and effectiveness of his/her coaching through interactive reflection, interpretative evaluation and sharing of expertise. To put it in more simpler terms, Supervision is a mentoring for mentors. It is a great and fantastic support system for mentors to share their areas of development, questioning of practice and approaches as well as offers of support from more experienced mentors who may have been in similar contexts/area of development.

Supervision is crucially the interaction that occurs between a mentor and their supervisor. The mentor brings their mentoring work experiences to a supervisor to be supported and to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the development and benefit of the mentor or coach, their clients, and their organisations. The collaborative nature of supervisions usually empowers mentors to analyse and reflect on a deeper level thus improving our ability to critic mentoring with mentees and develop solutions to develop practice.

Mentoring supervision is also the focusing on the development of their own practice. The supervision sessions provide time to explore techniques and help with their problems.

It provides an opportunity to reflect on their own practice as well as help and support if they feel out of their depth/struggling to develop their skills and application of techniques/research. Additionally, supervision with a more experienced mentor can support with ethical issues that may occur when working with mentees. This is particularly applicable when mentoring colleagues within an organisation.

From my own journey from starting on ETF new to mentoring courses, to gaining experiences with a wide range of clients and to enrolling onto ILM L5 qualification I have had supervision from more experienced mentors, and this has helped my practice invaluably. I have joined a community of practice where mentors who have had lots of tacit knowledge, years of mentoring experiences and ability to ask highly effective questioning are available for supervision when I have needed additional support. This has been particularly effective when working with reluctant mentees, new mentees and mentees who are challenging to work with.

The supervisions are now a regular bi – monthly part of my mentoring practice. I have a few more experienced mentors that I have made great supervisory relationships with. They allow me the time to discuss my problems/issues as well as give an insight into really effective questioning techniques they use to develop deeper self-reflection, discovery of generating solutions and empathy of situations they have faced has been critical to my own personal development.

Within both own personal self-reflection and benefits of supervision, mentors can also develop and share self-reflection methods with their mentees. The ability to self-reflect and know how to do so effectively can be shared with mentees to foster their own deeper self-reflection skills. This is another support skill that can be developed within mentoring sessions that can be used independently once formal mentoring sessions have been completed.

Spotlight on the NPQLTD

Helen King

A little about me

I have been a secondary science teacher at Branston Community Academy for the last 10 years, and have recently been promoted to an assistant HOD. We are an 11-18 all ability secondary school situated 4 miles to the South East of the city of Lincoln, with a cohort of around 1200.

Lincoln has been home for me since I studied my degree here. Whilst studying, I took part in a summer school run for disadvantaged students – which ultimately led me to a decision to train to teach. I started at the Academy as an NQT and, apart from two periods of maternity leave, have been there ever since.

Community is at the heart of our school and, despite some challenging times over the last few years, we have so many passionate teaching staff working to make a difference for our students. Our CPD has changed in delivery over the years, and so there are always opportunities to engage in and deliver sessions.

Why the NPQLTD?

Improving teaching and developing people has always been an interest to me and, although I have led the mentoring of ITT's in our department for the last 6 years, I have never really had the opportunity to look at the CPD that we offer to all of our staff – whether they be in the first or their 30th year of teaching! I liked the sound of the NPQLTD because it was going to help me to gain the knowledge and understanding of what effective CPD looks like in order to make sure staff are being upskilled and delivering high quality teaching. At the moment I will focus on this within the department, although I hope that there will be whole school opportunities for me later on.

I have been fortunate to deliver some CPD sessions historically, but a worry of mine was making sure the elements I delivered were useful to all of the staff attending. I had never been given any training on how to do

CPD, and this is what interested me in this particular NPQ. As I now have some responsibility in department, I aim to gain the knowledge and understanding on how to provide valuable CPD that supports our staff to deliver the high quality teaching that will ultimately achieve the best outcomes for our students.

How it is going so far?
At this point in the year I have completed 1 block of the 6 online modules required for the NPQ, and am part way through block 2. I have attended 1 face to face session, and 1 webinar. The self-study modules are well structured and their online availability means I have been able to fit it around a busy teaching schedule. There have not been any lengthy assignments too, and it is comforting to know that we have a reasonable amount of time to complete our final assessment next year.
I have found it really easy to learn about current and relevant research, in that it has been carefully selected and sequenced, and signed off by the EEF. This was something I was struggling to do on my own – sometimes it can feel like there is a sea of information out there but the time it takes to fish out the relevant pieces for you is not time manageable.

There are lots of extra reading opportunities that you can engage with throughout each block, and this has helped me to reflect on my own pedagogy too. The case studies in each module help you to reflect on your understanding of the research, and I like that the course is coherent with the ITT core content framework and the ECF too – it has been great to feel a sense of familiarity having experience of mentoring. I have taken so many great ideas back to the department, and we will be implementing some of them shortly.


It has been wonderful to network with teaching staff from other schools who share a passion for developing CPD, and I have managed to build some links with schools locally that can be useful for us in so many other areas. I chose a provider who I knew would offer the face to face sessions locally for this reason. The ability to have face to face discussions about the evidence base with other people studying their NPQ has enabled me to consider different perspectives and challenges, something that will come in useful if I move onto an alternative setting later on.

Would I recommend it?
Totally! I would recommend the NPQLTD to anyone who has an interest in developing quality professional development, whether this may be in department or on a whole school perspective. Even if you aren't in a position of responsibility, it would be worth investigating if you could still be provided with such opportunities.
There are so many useful things I have been able to learn in such a short time of study so far, and it has all been done around a full time teaching position. I have enjoyed reading the interesting case studies, read way more research than I ever would have done, and it has made me reflect on things that I might not have done before. I am looking forward to what is to come for the rest of the year.

If you are interested in completing the NPQLTD, get in touch with your local Teaching School Hub, who will be able to give you more information.
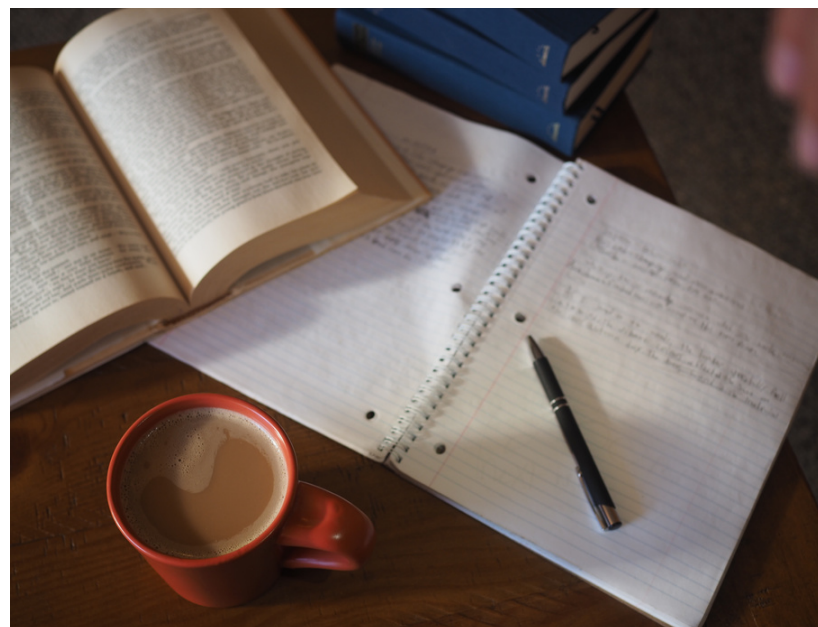
TO LEAD: TO MENTOR

Oliver Wright

Anyone working in education will have their own set of unique values and motivations. Often at the start of our career these may be vague and centre on a desire to help others or to make a difference. As we progress, initially as a trainee and eventually beyond, these may become increasingly refined. One of the challenges for those new to the profession is to understand what drives us, what our values are and where we feel most at home. This can often involve asking ourselves 'what' or 'why' type questions.

Many are encouraged to use the 5 Why Method. We approach an issue and repeatedly ask why, eventually peeling away layers to get to the root or core of an issue. The more clarity we get, the more able we are to identify our sweet spot. This can be used as a filter in order to say NO to projects that are not aligned with our values and YES to those avenues where we will be most effective.

Whilst using this method can be an effective way of working with others in a mentoring capacity, it can also be a good exercise to undertake ourselves.

Why do we mentor?

Or maybe even why should we mentor?

I asked myself those questions and here are my responses. Yours may be different, but it's still worth asking why you mentor and maybe even why you agree or disagree with my reasons.

5 Whys of Mentoring

Develop others:
This is probably the most obvious one. It's what many of us expect when we step up and take on a role. By undertaking a mentoring role, either formally or informally, we are looking to develop others. This potentially has a positive effect on those being mentored, but also should have a positive effect on our organisation.

·By developing others, we are increasing the skill base. Those people we develop can be more effective in their role and take on additional responsibilities. We are helping our organisation to become better, one person at a time.

Gain clarity on your own motivations, drives, beliefs etc.
This is a more subtle benefit of working with others. It pushes us to question our own ways of working and our own beliefs. When we watch other, reflect on what they are doing, what's working, what is more challenging and then how to turn this into a learning or development opportunity, something happens to us. We reflect not only on the person we are working with, but also on our own reaction to what we are seeing. This questioning of ourselves can help us clarify our own opinions, our own beliefs and our own educational philosophy.

Deeply understand your own pedagogy
In order to truly develop someone's practice, we need to really deeply understand what is going on. When we are teaching children, we need a deep subject knowledge in order to anticipate problems and give clear and precise instructions. We need to plan how learning will be structured. As a mentor this role is extended. We need to see what will happen in children's learning and help to structure this. Explaining this clearly to someone else often deepens our own understanding. We also need to understand the steps needed for someone else to reach the level of understanding we have. Planning for and explaining this deepens our own understanding still further.

Develop a skill that will be needed in leadership
Mentoring is all about developing others. At its core, leadership has this very function too. Often in leadership some of this happens more informally, but the skills needed to develop others can be sharpened through formal mentoring, then deployed regularly and informally. Good leaders are constantly looking for ways to develop their team and maximise the impact of others. Time spent learning these processes will never be wasted.

Remember the joy of seeing that progress
My last point is that those of us who enjoy developing others often do it for the simple pleasure of seeing that growth. Whilst it can be good for an organisation and good for our career, they are both side issues when compared to the joy and satisfaction of seeing people grow, develop and flourish.
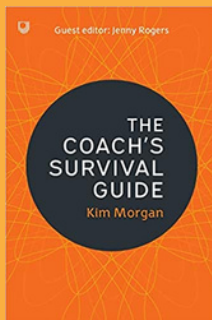
These are my 5 Whys of mentoring. You may agree, disagree or be somewhere on the fence. What is important for all of us is our ability to analyse and come to our own conclusions.

What are your 5 Whys?

Book Reviews

EDITOR'S SPOTLIGHT

'The coach's Survival Guide' by Kim Morgan

There is a worrying trend in schools to be rushing headlong into implementing a coaching programme, with little to no training for their coaches. To coach well, those doing the coaching need to have amassed a complex web of mental models, so that they can advise those they are coaching and draw out their reflections through skillful questioning. This book contains lots of advice and is grounded in practical skills to help any coach face common dilemmas they may encounter.
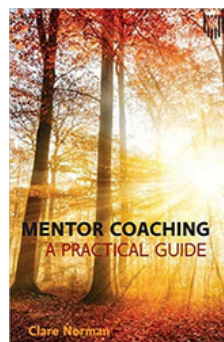
"Mentor Coaching' by Clare Norman

This interesting book explains to the reader how to develop as a coach using mentor coaching, as well as how to develop as a mentor coach, to support other coaches to develop. The chapters are short, easily digestible and have lots of relatable real life case studies. A really illuminating read.
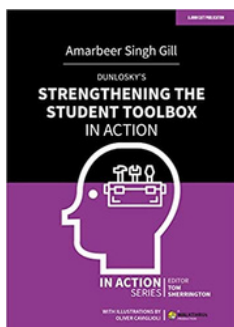
'Dunlosky's Strengthening the Student Toolbox in Action' by Amarbeer Singh Gill

Mentoring an ECT or trainee is about much more than just developing mentoring skills, mentors also need to be experts of pedagogy and their own subjects. Thus, having a thorough grasp of what the research is telling us what might be best bets for teachers is a must. This latest book in the 'In action series' will really help mentors get to grips with the work of Dunlosky, so that they can advise and support their mentee. Like the rest of the titles in this series, it breaks complex research down into practical tips, which bridge the knowing doing gap. Recommend!

To get your book reviewed please email haili.hughes@outlook.com

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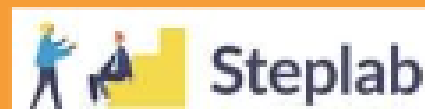
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Neil Mullen on 'Effective Questioning: The what and how'
Sam Strickland on supporting your trainee with behaviour

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SCAFFOLDING AND MODELLING

Liam Anderson

PROVIDING SCAFFOLDING AND MODELLING OF GREAT TEACHING WHEN MENTORING STUDENT TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

This article follows on from an initial teacher training (ITT) Mentor TeachMeet with the University of Reading, sharing school-based best practice from across Berkshire with mentoring secondary student teachers. This article will focus on scaffolding and modelling in relation to two areas of mentoring student teachers: lesson planning and lesson feedback.

I have been a school-based design and technology student teacher mentor with the University of Reading since January 2018, picking up the role as a mentor five years ago, partly by surprise and having had no prior mentoring experience. Now, just over five years on, I have worked with six different design and technology student teachers from Reading and am a much more experienced and confident mentor. It has only been through experience of mentoring over time, training and TeachMeets with the university and through wider reading and support networks from the teaching community, that has enabled me to become a more effective mentor and more reflective about my approach to mentoring.

In this article, I will share some of the learning I have acquired as a mentor and experienced expert teacher, focusing on supporting novice student teachers in their development during their initial teacher training year and beyond, with the hope of providing new mentors with advice and ideas for mentoring student teachers in schools.

Something that always excites me about having a student teacher on a placement, is that none are ever the same (which is always exciting!); some come with a wealth of experience in perhaps industry and professional careers, others straight from a degree and their experiences, knowledge and skills acquired prior to commencing training is always rich and refreshing in what they bring to the school/department/classroom and their perspective about the subject. One thing for sure, in the vast majority of cases, student teachers are new to the classroom and teaching, perhaps having not been in schools since the end of their own secondary/formal education. Having said that, there are some student teachers who might have previously taught in different settings, perhaps as an unqualified teacher/instructor or had other roles in schools, giving them some school-based experience.

Yet, it is highly likely that for new student teachers, their experience, knowledge and skills as a classroom teacher is very limited or non-existent and would therefore see most new student teachers as novices to the profession of teaching, or certainly subject specialist teaching in secondary schools. The shear breadth of knowledge required to teach secondary level subjects, adds a whole other layer of learning for new classroom teachers, both with core, substantive and procedural knowledge for example, alongside subject specific pedagogies for effective teaching in the subject; some may have come from specific specialisms (e.g. a background in design, journalism, law, sport etc) and may need to broaden the realm of their knowledge and skills to be versatile teachers of the subject at secondary level.

What we teach and how we teach it needs to be carefully considered by a student teacher and it is likely to be very different from a student teacher's own experiences and perhaps industry/specialist background, which is highlighted within the secondary subject of D&T by Hardy (2021). So, there is lots for a new student teacher to learn – the vast body of subject knowledge itself, as well as specific teaching and learning approaches for enabling understanding of how students learn in the subject and more generally, both essential to develop knowledge and understanding of teaching in their subject.

A Teach First article by Moore (2019) discusses student teachers and their development during their training year, considering the different stages student teachers might be at in their development as a classroom teacher and five stages of expertise in teacher development:
1. Novice
2. Advanced beginner
3. Competent
4. Proficient
5. Expert

Linked to these stages of teacher development, Glaser (see Moore 2019) writes about the support required for teachers at different stages in their development:

Stage 1 – externally supported – highly coached, deliberate practice and short feedback cycles.
At this stage, the student teacher would be highly reliant on mentoring/coaching from a more experienced subject specialist teacher with regular and precise feedback on areas for development. Likely to see this during most part of a student teacher's initial teacher training (ITT) year.

Stage 2 – transitional, decrease in scaffolding.
Here, we would expect a student teacher becoming more confident and established in the most part, but continues to develop teaching practice with ongoing CPD and support from more experienced teacher colleagues. Perhaps, more what we would see from a student teacher nearing the end of their initial teacher training year/moving into becoming an early-career teacher (ECT).

Stage 3 – self-regulatory – own their development, able to critique and reflect. By this stage, a teacher would have developed some substantial experience, perhaps over a number of years as a teacher. A teacher at this stage, might be more focused on their own development needs and see professional development as a long-term continuous process (Anderson 2021).

Taking the above into account, student teachers that we are mentoring are certain to be between the stages of 'novice' and 'advanced beginner' (perhaps not with their specialist subject knowledge, but certainly with the subject specialist pedagogical knowledge and ability to effectively implement this in the classroom) during their training year; they will require lots of external support from more experienced teachers through coaching, deliberate practice of teaching in the classroom and regular and precise feedback, to enable sustained progress and development as a confident and effective classroom teacher. This will obviously take time and perhaps even beyond a student teacher's initial teacher training year, depending on the speed of their development, meaning student teachers are highly likely to continue needing high external support from experienced teachers right until the end of their training year. It is common, certainly in the UK, for student teachers to train in at least two different school setting placements and it can be assumed, that perhaps a student teacher arriving at a second placement school later on in the year can be further along with their development than it might seem; they have built up some teaching experience, but are still very early on in their development at the 'novice'/'advanced beginner' stage as a teacher.

The complexities of teaching in the classroom with lesson structure and design, pedagogy, assessment, knowledge of pupils, perhaps considerations of health and safety, resourcing and equipment in practical lessons etc is all multi-faceted and whilst some student teachers may develop more quickly, the extent to how effectively student teachers can deliver great teaching in the classroom will be highly variable

and therefore, will require that ongoing high levels of support and feedback throughout the whole of the initial teacher training year.

We are familiar with using the ideas of scaffolding and modelling with the pupils we teach in our classrooms and understand these as important pedagogical components in learning and progress with pupils, but perhaps overlook this approach to providing precise and effective developmental support to the student teaches we are mentoring or coaching in our classrooms.

Student teachers will likely cover a lot of content in university taught sessions and wider reading about pedagogy; both general pedagogy such as direct instruction or group work and more subject specific pedagogies. Student teachers will often come with ideas about what pedagogy to use in the classroom and some idea of how to go about implementing that pedagogy, but often, the effective implementation of this pedagogy in the classroom is much harder than it first appears, with specific patterns and purposes behind subject specific pedagogies and we therefore need to support student teachers through explicit scaffolding and modelling when mentoring/coaching. So there are two facets to pedagogy – 1) knowing what to do/about it (the pedagogy/theory behind it) and 2) knowing how to do it - and effectively (the implementation in practice). The latter is what often many student teachers struggle with without the high levels of external support, scaffolding and modelling through mentoring from experienced classroom teachers.
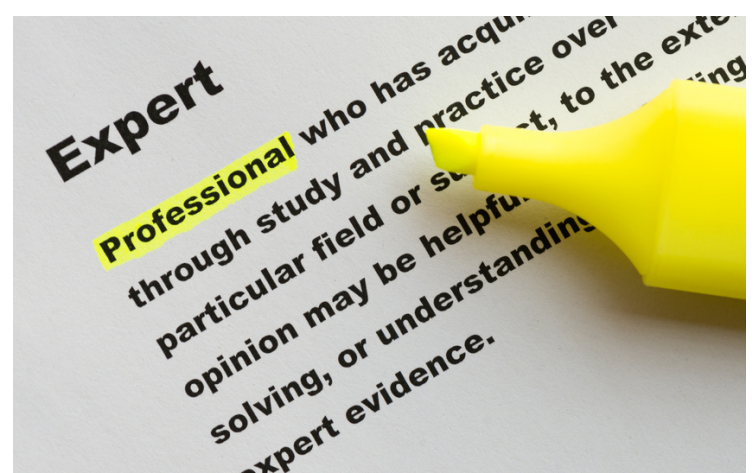
Beattie et al. (2020), explains how when planning, an experienced teacher, "may describe planning as more spontaneous, juggling aspects of subject knowledge, awareness of pedagogy, knowledge of pupils and a myriad of other considerations", going on to also say that, "a mentor needs to have stepped away from almost natural and now intuitive approach to planning... the commentary, or 'thinking out loud', that ascribes these stages and the rationale behind them will be helpful in the initial discussions... the dialogue will include sharing and modelling how the mentor would plan."

This highlights the need for mentors to be completely explicit about the small details of the process of planning and the thinking behind it, rather than assuming that student teachers would automatically know the precise details of putting together an effective lesson plan and considering the pedagogical approaches that are most appropriate and effective for teaching within each subject discipline.

Below shows an example of some collaborative planning between myself (mentor/experienced D&T teacher) and a D&T student teacher. The planning was done together on how the student teacher might give feedback on a design specification a pupil had written. Through this collaborative planning and conversation, I, as the mentor/experienced D&T teacher led on the process of how planning a feedback session to pupils in the next lesson might be done effectively

and the pedagogical approaches to use. Through precise modelling and scaffolding, the following was discussed:

·Firstly, what exactly is being looked for from pupils – the success criteria or what an 'excellent' design specification would look like. Discussing this with the D&T student teacher gave them a better understanding of what they need to be clear about with the pupils and what pupils need to do to achieve for success.

·Secondly, we looked at the key things we would be looking for from the above/how to identify these in the piece of work – e.g. have they linked their specification points to their research about user needs and wants? Have they justified/explained each of their specification points? Are they specific enough to include in their design ideas/evaluate against their designs? We discussed a range of examples – good examples and less good examples to be clear on exactly what we are looking for in pupils' work and get a clear understanding of where they are at now.

·Thirdly, we then considered how we might do to support pupils to make improvements to their work. We discussed the above pupils' work and how we might share with pupils what makes a better specification. We went through how this might be shared with pupils using of a visualiser and live modelling during the following lesson, looking at how to write an 'excellent' specification point. I explicitly discussed with the student teacher how I would show pupils this process and structure when writing a design specification, talking about for example, the key requirements and how we would consider different design factors.

Lastly, we about together and I wrote in green pen, some of the questions we might ask pupils during the live modelling feedback session in the classroom and how we might structure and model examples of 'excellent' specification points.

Our dialogue was explicitly clear about exactly how the student teacher can do this effectively. We discussed how then a specific practice task/improvement time would be given to pupils to improve their own design specifications, discussing precisely what time frame to give and following the process live modelled to students under the visualiser.

This explicit and precise modelling of the process of collaborative planning between the mentor/experienced teacher and student teacher, provides appropriate and necessary scaffolding needed at this stage in their development for effective implementation in the classroom. This explicit modelling and scaffolding of pedagogies for great teaching allowed the student teacher to better understand the process and how to effectively plan pedagogy in practice and implement in the classroom. The high level of scaffolding from the experienced teacher is likely to be needed for some time during the initial teacher training year to ensure that the experienced teacher does not assume a student teacher's knowledge and capability with effective lesson planning or rush through the process of effective planning. Davies (2020) suggests that, "as a mentor, thinking about these [lesson planning] questions as you model a plan or collaboratively plan, will allow you to articulate a thoughtful commentary for the mentee", adding, "the speed at which you would ordinarily plan in your head needs to be slowed down for the beginning teacher, so that they can see and hear the process."

When working with a student teacher, consider the following when providing scaffolding and modelling to ensure that pedagogy is explicit in how to implement effectively during lesson planning:

· Lots of classroom observation to see specific pedagogies in practice – student teachers need to see really clearly and explicitly how experienced teachers implement effectively – both practical and non-practical lessons.

· Modelling with student teachers effective practice and breaking down building blocks to implementing in the classroom – e.g. giving effective demonstrations of using a piece of equipment.

· Collaborative planning with clear conversations about thought process around lesson design, chosen pedagogies etc - narrating the process to the student teacher.

· Lots of examples of best practice – e.g. examples of planning/resourcing/student work – but used alongside conversations of how this was done.

Teaching WalkThrus (Sherrington & Caviglioli 2020) is an excellent book for teachers on instructional coaching, with clear models for how different aspects of pedagogy might be implemented in the classroom. Below is an example on 'Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction', where it is clear to see how the process is clearly broken down into key building blocks with narration of how each step would be effectively implemented.

PRESENT NEW MATERIAL USING SMALL STEPS   PROVIDE MODELS   PROVIDE SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS   ASK QUESTIONS   CHECK FOR STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Scaffolding and modelling for student teachers in lesson feedback:

In the process of giving lesson feedback to student teachers (post-lesson delivery), it is important to provide clear and specific actions for next steps/areas for development, but with this, precise and explicit modelling and scaffolding to support student teachers with acting on those areas for development. Simply saying to a student teacher to work on 'improving clarity of demonstrations for using equipment, so that all pupils understand what to do', will be vague and complex to effectively act on for the novice teacher and will require lots of modelling and scaffolding from the mentor/experienced teacher to enable this to be effectively actioned in the classroom.

Winson (2020) comments on how, "vague, abstract targets such as 'you need to give clear instructions'... is difficult for the beginning teacher, especially a trainee teacher, to unravel. Sometimes they will not understand or have developed enough experience to know how to achieve this". Davies (2020) adds to this saying, "it is through conversations, with experienced teachers, about classroom practice that the expert teacher can help the novice teacher to see the complexity and dynamic nature of the decisions a teacher makes within the process of teaching and learning".

When working with a student teacher, consider the following when giving feedback to ensure areas for development are precise and explicit through modelling and scaffolding:
·Lots of focus on the how – providing specific and actionable areas for development.

·This then links back to the planning stages of how developments will be made in the following sequence of lessons and focuses back on: observation to clearly and explicitly see teaching in practice; modelling with student teachers the building blocks of effective pedagogy in the classroom; collaborative planning and discussion; and lots of examples and discussion of how it is done.

Refection task:
Consider an aspect of teaching in your subject that you are familiar with as an experienced teacher. In D&T, this could be for example, showing pupils how to draw basic shapes in 3D using perspective to help communicate their design ideas effectively; or, showing pupils how to use a vacuum former to help them understand different ways of forming plastic materials for manufacture. Plan out the explicit steps/building blocks, you would need to consider if teaching it to pupils in your classroom and consider how you might model and scaffold this process with a student teacher.
What pedagogical approach might you use? Is it a subject specific pedagogy or a more general one?

Why have you chosen that pedagogy/why is it effective for this particular content?
What are the key building blocks that pupils need to know/be able to do to achieve success with this?
How will you share/communicate what 'excellent' look like to the pupils?
How would you narrate the process of guiding pupils through this learning?

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MENTOR'S MENTAL HEALTH: HOW MUCH DO WE CONSIDER IT?

ROSIE BOOKER

Thinking back to my own early years training and qualifying as a teacher, I remember the stress, the anxiety, the fear that I wasn't doing things right. Most certainly there was a sense of imposter syndrome as I worked tirelessly to be a good teacher and feeling I was not delivering my ambition to support students in the way I desired.

As a result, my mental health was affected; I struggled to sleep, fixated on small problems, and spent more time crying than I would like to confess. Mentoring was my saviour: the support provided to me helped me to thrive. Guidance from more experienced teachers, not necessarily within my own department, and a chance to talk through issues and receive advice was invaluable at this time to help me grow as an individual and an educator.

We all know that this is what good mentors do: they support, they lead, they provide guidance, and in turn, we can all find our paths through a strong mentor.

There is no doubt in my mind of the impact mentors have on assisting with positive mental health of mentees, but have you ever considered the impact mentoring has on the mentor's mental health too? Education Support, a charity that gives mental health help to education professionals, found that 78% of teachers report experiencing mental health symptoms due to their work in 2022. Stress, anxiety, and depression are cited as being at unsustainably high levels in the teaching profession and this is causing growing pressure on schools to make improvements to change this. This makes uncomfortable reading for anyone, so what can we do about it?

Surprisingly, one of the solutions could be mentoring.

Studies into the benefits of mentoring have shown the significant positive effects it has on individual's mental health and wellbeing: improved self-confidence; more self-awareness; developing leadership skills; improved communication skills; and job satisfaction. Both mentors and mentees have positive gains through the process of mentoring.

Harvard Business Review (2019) conducted small-scale research into how mentoring impacted individuals in high-stress jobs and found that people who work as mentors themselves, experience lower levels of anxiety and described their jobs as being more meaningful. This was often due to shared experiences: when a mentee shares their concerns and anxieties around a job, as a mentor, we suggest strategies and advice to guide them with these. In return, we recognise these same problems in our own roles and through sharing these concerns and acknowledging them as commonplace, we in turn feel more confident about our own positions.

For me, mentoring has always given me a focus, a determination to improve my own teaching skills and in turn, listen to my own advice I give to mentees. When mentoring a trainee or ECT, we gain insights into new ideas and research that help us to further improve our own teaching skills. We enhance our leadership skills by gaining opportunities to create action plans, listen to needs and evaluate progress.

Similarly to me, I've seen individuals struggle; I've listened, I've shared my own experiences and I hope, in turn, this support has helped them as my mentor helped me long ago. I love mentoring, thrive on it, and want to be the person who has that long-term positive impact as they start of their careers or for my colleagues in difficult times.

Mentoring is something many of us are passionate about: we do it voluntarily, giving up hours to support those at the start of their careers or our peers who need that extra boost. We give up our time, become their confidante and help them to unlock their potential. We give so much of ourselves to helping others, often not considering our own needs. Yet, inherently we are gaining from these interactions with our colleagues without being fully aware.

Another benefit of mentoring on mental health is that it takes us away from our own isolation and since the pandemic, this can only be a positive thing. Having someone we talk to regularly, even when in a situation where we are listening and giving them guidance, gives us opportunities to talk about our own lives. Having shared experiences and communication improves anxiety and stress levels. Mentoring creates a shared safe space. Mental health issues often stem from feelings of poor self-esteem and lack of belief in ourselves. By working with others and investing in their success, you have a positive impact on your own self-beliefs. You feel good from helping others.

Let's face it, teaching is a highly stressful career choice and learning how to balance vast numbers of responsibilities and take care of our own wellbeing can be difficult.

We all need to take control of our mental wellbeing. Spending so much time focused on the wellbeing of others, it is easy to forget about ourselves and instead we fixate on our work. For me, mentoring reminds me of this. It reminds me to take time to check in with myself and ensure that I am being the best I can be. Mentoring provides us with better mental health – so embrace your role and remember those benefits when the stress of work is overwhelming.

For further support regarding teacher stress, anxiety and workload you can contact Education Support on 08000562561.

Leicester and Leicestershire Teacher Educator Conference

In partnership with:

SCITT · Leicester & Leicestershire Teaching School Hub · Leicestershire Secondary SCITT · TELA · The Mead Institute of Professional Learning · UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Empowering Mentors;
Shaping the Future

Tuesday 27th June 2023

Sir Bob Burgess Building, University of Leicester (LE2 7TF)
9:00 arrival for a 9:30 start. Conference closes at 3:30

Join Leicester and Leicestershire ITT and ECF providers to develop your role supporting trainee teachers and Early Career Teachers. The role of mentor is important for all schools to invest in to nurture and develop the impact school staff have on the outcomes for all pupils.

This conference is for you if you have any of the following roles:
- ITT mentor / co-tutor / co-ordinator
- ECT mentor
- Headteacher or senior leader
- ITT tutor or facilitator

Keynote speaker **Haili Hughes**
With further keynote contributions from:
- Fe Brewer, LSS Mentoring Lead
- Learn-AT Associate Research School
- Experienced ITT and ECT mentors

Haili Hughes is an English teacher, former Head of Department and Senior Leader who has mentored new teachers and ITT students for over ten years. She now works as a Principal Lecturer in Mentoring and Professional Development at the University of Sunderland. She is in the unique position of delivering the CCF at Sunderland, the ECF in her local LEA and also delivering the new NPQLTD in Manchester.
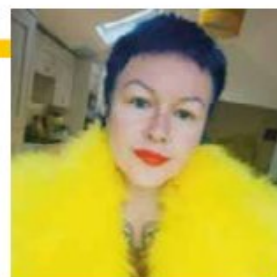
Cost: £30 (all refreshments included)
Please complete the form linked below/left to register your place!
https://forms.office.com/e/PSFMsuqaec
Closing date for registration: Tuesday 6th June

More Info...

A DAY IN THE LIFE

of a mentor

@MRS_SENDCO

attending as well as I could be so stopped trying to find an opener and listened - opting for graphic facilitation instead of just writing.

WEDNESDAY

A day of meetings with stakeholders and colleagues. Lots of opportunity for active listening and I continued mapping out what my coaching programme is going to look like. I have a lot of theory to read, I have to contract coachees before I start and plan out what the sessions will look like. Contracting involves everything from GDPR and safeguarding to time and place and what it will look like and how to exit if it's not working. As a SENDCO and Mental Health First Aider, I regularly have conversations that are sometimes one offs, sometime reviews, sometimes difficult, always (hopefully) purposeful and I'm hoping coaching is really going to strengthen the quality of what I offer when supporting and developing others.

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

I don't work Thursdays and Fridays but I will use the time to read around theory and practise of coaching and catch up on paperwork and emails. Currently I'm reading "Simplifying Coaching" for my CPD book

MONDAY

On Monday, I took one of our new external providers through induction. It took over an hour just going around school and talking about a caseload but a thorough tour and introduction to key staff was a good investment of time. I ended my day having spent some time doing practical things in class which I always enjoy - I'd managed over 10000 steps but the time I got home, some days where it's paperwork heavy I struggle to get over 3000 during the day.

TUESDAY

I had a coaching training session as part of the L5 coaching I'm doing. I'm finding myself really concentrating on not using filler-type conversation and allowing the person I'm talking to the time to find the right words of what they're trying to express or ask. I attended a meeting with colleagues discussing professional development - I caught myself making copious notes and waiting for an opportunity to put my own suggestions forward - I realised I wasn't

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