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A mentoring mindset (Meddylfryd mentora)

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Introduction

Introduction

This course, *A mentoring mindset (Meddylfryd mentora)*, will help you to develop your understanding of effective school-based mentoring of beginner teachers, whether they are in initial teacher education (ITE) or have just qualified as a teacher. The course enables you to consider the principles of effective mentoring, and how your role may move towards coaching as the beginner teacher you are mentoring grows as a teacher.

Being a mentor is an important role as you are a teacher-educator within your school-based context. Beginner teachers must progress along a continuum of familiarisation and consolidation of principles of teaching and learning, through to autonomous practice if they are to take their place as a professional teacher. You will provide the support and challenge they need to do this.

Mentoring is a challenging but rewarding role, as you engage in reflection on your own teaching and leadership practices, and help others take their place in the community of professional and effective teachers.

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- understand the principles of effective mentoring in initial teacher education and the role of the mentor as a teacher educator within a school-based context
- understand that mentoring is a continuum which also includes coaching
- apply theories of mentoring and coaching within teacher-practice when supporting beginner teachers
- understand mentoring as a professional learning opportunity for the development of personal teaching and leadership development.

Get started with

Week 1: What does it mean to be a mentor for a beginner teacher?

Introduction

This week will help to develop your understanding of effective school-based mentoring of beginner teachers. It is designed to enable you to understand effective mentoring. As is made clear, mentors have an important role as teacher-educators within the school-based context, supporting and challenging beginner teachers to ensure they progress from needing familiarisation with the role and mores of being a teacher through to consolidation of those ideas and ultimaely to be able to become an autonomous teacher. The rewards of mentoring are also explored, as you engage in reflection on your own teaching and leadership practices.

Activity planner

Activity	Learning actions	Time
Activity 1 Mentoring from different perspectives	Watch the video and identify the different expectations people place on the role of the mentor in school.	20 mins
Activity 2 Reflecting on and auditing mentoring skills	Fill in a table of mentoring skills and audit your current skills.	30 mins
Activity 3 Promoting reflective dialogue	Review two dialogues and suggest improvements.	30 mins

Learning outcomes

By the end of this week, you should be able to:

- articulate what is expected of a mentor for a beginner teacher in school
- audit your own mentoring skills
- know how to support a beginner teacher as they start in school
- convey what a wider role in mentoring in school could mean.

1 What does it mean to be a teacher-educator in school?

Teaching is complex. It is no surprise then that learning to teach (as the mentee) and teaching to teach (as a mentor) can be just as complex. Most programmes of initial teacher education in the United Kingdom (UK) now place an emphasis on the crucial role a mentor plays in supporting beginner-teachers' learning, positioning the mentor as an expert teacher-educator in the school context. The following activity will help you reflect on what mentoring means from differing perspectives.

Activity 1 Mentoring from different perspectives

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Watch the video and consider the importance of mentoring in initial teacher education (ITE) from different perspectives.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1 What is great mentoring?

WHAT IS GREAT MENTORING?

Identify the different expectations people may place on the role of the mentor in your school, and note down your thoughts in the box below.

Provide your answer...

An important aspect of the mentor's role is to help the beginner teacher bring together the more theoretical learning that tends to be part of their university study with the experiential learning they do in school – this will be discussed next.

1.1 Bringing together school and university

Beginner teachers often view their time spent in school as one of the most useful aspects of their learning. It is where they learn about good practice in the practical context of their school and start the difficult process of learning how to draw on the 'craft knowledge' of more experienced teachers (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006).

Figure 1

There is also important research-based knowledge that beginner teachers must understand, and this is traditionally where universities have played a central role. However, in modern initial teacher education (ITE) programmes there is an increasing emphasis on the need for students to understand, blend and apply intellectual and experiential forms of knowledge, and for programmes of ITE to design their provision and curricula to support this integration (Lofthouse, 2018). Hagger and McIntyre (2006) call this process 'practical theorizing'. In this process, a beginner teacher draws on theory and research to identify ideas to improve their practice and then begins to critically examine the usefulness of these ideas in the context of their own practice, their subject or phase, their pupils and their school. The mentor has a key role to play in this process. They support beginner teachers to develop sufficient competence to use practical theorizing as they move towards teaching independently.

How the work of a mentor is perceived will vary greatly in schools. Senior leaders have a duty to choose as mentors those teachers who have a sound knowledge of the programmes the students are engaged in, strong interpersonal skills and a clear understanding of the needs of a beginner teacher working towards the expected standards (Estyn, 2018).

A mentor must also support a beginner teacher by nurturing the growth of particular dispositions. These dispositions include recognising the need for continuing development by taking responsibility for their own professional learning throughout their career, and developing an appetite for critical engagement with research to continually improve and innovate their classroom practice and their response to the learners for whom they are responsible.

1.2 Effective mentoring

Hobson and Malderez (2013) define mentoring as:

The one to one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession [teaching] and into the specific local context [school].

Hobson and Malderez, 2013, p. 1

This definition makes clear that one of the primary roles mentors play is both acculturator and sponsor (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). Mentors support beginner teachers to move progressively into the community of practice of the school by helping them to learn the practices and expectations of teaching and of the school context.

Mentors also work in a developmental capacity. Close support is offered initially and then, as the beginner teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding increase and they become both more proficient and confident, the emphasis shifts to empowering and enabling (Clutterbuck, 2004). The mentor's role is to support the beginner teacher along this continuum as they move towards autonomy.

Mentoring is also about bridging the beginner teacher's school and university or academic experiences – taking a wider interest in your mentee's academic work will also help provide holistic support. The effective mentor works to shape the beginner teachers' understanding of the interrelationship between learning from research, theory and experience and how the context itself affects learning (Mutton, Hagger and Burn, 2011). Here the mentor is educator, collaborator and model.

Lastly, mentors also need to provide emotional support for beginner teachers in order to ensure their wellbeing. This role can often be under-emphasised by mentors who may place more significant focus on practical issues such as classroom management or subject knowledge.

The variety of roles that effective mentors need to play are summarised in Figure 2 (to view a larger pdf version: open this link in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl, or Cmd on a Mac, when you click)

Figure 2 The variety of roles a mentor takes on

The next activity will help you consider your own mentoring skills and identify where your strengths may be.

Activity 2 Reflecting on and auditing mentoring skills

🕐 *Allow approximately 30 minutes*

Reflect on the different elements of a mentor's role as set out in Figure 2. Consider what you do (or can do) to help you accomplish this aspect of mentoring. Reflect on your personal areas of strength and where you need to develop your skills using the table below. Rate your proficiency from 1 to 5.

Table 1 Auditing your skills

Mentor skills	How do I achieve this?	1 (Not very strong)	2	3
I can act as a positive role model.	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*
I am able to enthuse a beginner teacher in relation to the	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

content to be taught.

I can help beginner teachers to understand the school context and how this affects practice.

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

I recognise when I need to draw on the expertise of other colleagues to support the beginner teacher's needs.

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

I am open to professional learning opportunities, including exploring research.

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

Through my mentoring, I am able to develop my beginner teacher's quality and depth of reflection.

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

I set SMART targets to support my beginner teacher to progress and to meet professional standards.

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

I understand how to assess my beginner teacher's progress effectively

Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answe*

and accurately.

I use observation of my beginner teacher's practice to provide helpful feedback to enhance their pedagogical learning.

| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answe* |

I facilitate a range of development experiences across the school to support my beginner teacher's practice needs.

| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answe* |

I am familiar with my beginner teacher's ITE or induction programme design, requirements and assessment methods.

| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answe* |

I plan specific opportunities and methods to provide support and challenge for my beginner teacher.

| *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answe* |

You can use your audit findings to reflect on your strengths and areas for development. You may also wish to consider setting yourself some targets to realise as you complete the course. In Week 4, you will return to this activity to consider your progress.

2 Supporting your beginner teacher in the early stages

Learning to teach, or inducting a new teacher into a school, require mentoring roles that lie along a continuum – from close and careful support and challenge at the start, to being there as a back-up and an encourager as the beginner teacher moves towards autonomy. Mentoring calls for different skills at different times and a consideration of the structure of learning opportunities over time, in order to give the beginner teacher new challenges and responsibilities as their expertise develops.

2.1 Consider how ready your mentee is to engage in the mentoring process

At the start of the process, it is important to establish the beginner teacher's expectations of you as a mentor and to consider how these align to your own expectations. Beginner teachers do not arrive as a 'blank slate' – while you will have clear ideas about the expectations for teaching and learning in your school, they will also be bringing in their own personal dispositions and perhaps those of their university's community of practice too. Making the expectations of both parties clear will set the relationship off well.

2.2 Establish a focus on 'practical theorizing' early on

Consider how you can support and challenge your beginner teacher, while promoting reflection on the approaches and rationale they have chosen in their teaching. Feedback that promotes thought and reflection is an especially important part of the mentoring dialogue. Helpful feedback affirms successful practice but also highlights where the beginner teacher may need new approaches or ideas, and it encourages them to look to theory and research for innovation (Mutton, Hagger and Burn, 2011).

Think about how you can prompt important aspects of discussion such as critical reflection, pedagogical issues, principles underpinning practice or issues of social reform or justice, as part of your professional dialogue (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). Articulating ideas in a critically reflective way supports the growth of practical theorizing, allowing dynamic mentoring conversations that both assist the beginner teacher and allow the experienced mentor to co-construct new ideas for teaching (Lofthouse, 2018).

2.3 Focus on building a positive relationship with your mentee

The most effective mentors build positive relationships with beginner teachers and provide support for emotional wellbeing. They help beginner teachers to feel welcome, accepted and included within their wider school community. It is true that mentors have an important role to play in assessing the beginner teacher's progress in relation to regulatory requirements such as professional standards. But, if too much focus is placed on the role of 'assessor' early in the mentor-mentee relationship, tension can be caused. Focus on establishing a solid relationship built on trust, in which you provide a safe environment for learning and risk-taking in the initial stages (Lofthouse, 2018). Take care not to overwhelm your beginner teacher with too much feedback in the early stages, or to make it too critical: focus on what they can do and on giving a few clear targets that they can achieve.

3 Supporting beginner teachers' reflective practice

Effective mentors encourage beginner teachers to critically reflect on their practice by modelling what this looks like in a variety of ways. Reflection can either be formal or informal, and it will be most powerful if the three elements of critical reflection (reflection, critical thinking and evaluation) are considered.

The importance of exploiting opportunities for informal reflection should not be underestimated. In research undertaken by Jones, Tones and Foulkes (2018), informal dialogue (which would be likely to involve some reflection) between mentors and beginner teachers was seen as where students made most progress, particularly when the relationship was both positive and collaborative.

Table 2 Some ideas for approaches that support reflective practice

Strategy	Examples
Reflective journals or diaries	Record incidents, ideas and reflections gained from different sources such as observations and training courses. Can be a notebook or shared blog, which includes informal reflections to be considered during mentor meetings and informal feedback.
Mentor sessions	A set time for in-depth reflection, evaluation and target setting.
Shared practice	Observation of the mentor or undertaking more formal structures such as lesson study or joint planning and team teaching.
Observation	Lesson observations – both formal and informal. *Informal:* used to prompt reflective practice and to provide a basis for formative assessment and discussion. *Formal:* used for assessment purposes, often in collaboration with external practice assessors.
Feedback	Part of professional dialogue and often following a lesson observation. Can take various forms (e.g. formal, informal; general, specific; directive, open-ended).
Problem-based learning	Analysis of real-life scenarios.
Learner voice	Time for learners to complete evaluations or talk about their learning. Used to inform reflection.

These strategies to support reflective practice are based on the ideas within the guidance on 'Reflective practice' (Welsh Government, 2015), with some additions.

The next activity will help you reflect on how mentoring conversations can encourage reflective practice.

Activity 3 Promoting reflective dialogue

🕐 *Allow approximately 30 minutes*

Listen to the audios below, which capture the dialogue between two mentors and their beginner teachers. Consider what is problematic in each scene and identify possible suggestions for how the dialogue could have been more effective.

Audio 1

Audio content is not available in this format.

What did the beginner teacher need from their mentor in this scenario?

Provide your answer...

What did the beginner teacher gain from the dialogue?

Provide your answer...

What do you see as problematic?

Provide your answer...

How could the dialogue have been more effective?

Provide your answer...

Audio 2

Audio content is not available in this format.

What did the beginner teacher need from their mentor in this scenario?

Provide your answer...

What did the beginner teacher gain from the dialogue?

Provide your answer...

What do you see as problematic?

> *Provide your answer...*

How could the dialogue have been more effective?

> *Provide your answer...*

Reflecting on both scenarios, write a short response in the box below on effective mentoring conversations

> *Provide your answer...*

Mentors have a clear role to support and challenge a beginner teacher through appropriate mentoring conversations, but they can also grow their role within their school to take on more responsibilities. This wider role is considered next.

4 Mentoring as a wider role

Mentoring can involve the support of one beginner teacher, or it can grow to take wider responsibilities for several beginner teachers in school or to a whole-school, strategic approach to mentoring.

Taking on a wider role is likely to involve working closely with one or more ITE partnerships to ensure the cohesive design of beginner teachers' learning experiences, and a shared vision of effective mentoring practices across your school (and perhaps other schools in your network).

A wider mentoring role will also require ensuring a number of practical structural supports are provided within the school, such as: enabling additional release time for mentors to undertake their work; timetable structures to enable mentor/mentee time together in the classroom; and professional learning support and recognition for the work of mentoring (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). Establishing a collegial learning culture, with access to support for both mentors and beginner teachers outside of their mentoring relationship, is also an important aspect of the role.

Reflection point

- What whole-school structures are in place in your school to support mentors and the effectiveness of mentoring?
- How are these intended to support your practice as a mentor?
- How would you collaborate with others in your school or wider school networks to support your mentoring?

5 Week 1 summary

This week you have considered the role of the mentor in school. A mentor is viewed as a teacher-educator in their own right, and helps the beginner teacher bring together experiential and intellectual forms of knowledge.

Mentoring is recognised as a continuum along which mentors apply a range of skills tailored to the needs and expertise of their beginner teacher, offering both support and challenge as needed. At the start, the mentor welcomes the beginner teacher into the school and helps them understand the school context. As soon as the beginner teacher is settled, the mentor moves on to supporting the beginner teacher to articulate and reflect on their practice, enabling them to become increasingly autonomous and able to meet standards for entry into the profession.

Mentors also support beginner teachers to explore research and theory, and to include innovations in their practice. Effective mentors set beginner teachers on a journey of professional learning for their whole career. Mentors understand how and when to collaborate with others to support the beginner teacher. Importantly, effective mentors know how to build and draw on wider networks of expertise to support their own mentoring practice, and the teaching knowledge of beginner teachers.

You can now go to Week 2.

Week 2: Growing with your mentee – mentoring as a continuum

Introduction

In Week 1 you were introduced to the principles of effective mentoring. This week focuses on how mentoring may develop and change as both you and your mentee gain experience and confidence. In the first part, the main factors in this continuum will be discussed, and then the focus will move to theories of mentoring and how these apply to practice. The week will end with a consideration of how research can support your mentoring practice.

Activity planner

Activity	Learning actions	Time
Activity 1 Support or challenge?	Review table of scenarios and consider how you would react.	20 mins
Activity 2 Symbiotic relationships	Watch a video, reflect on your own experience.	30 mins
Activity 3 Supporting reflection in different situations	Reacting to scenarios.	20 mins
Activity 4 Theories into practice	Reacting to scenarios.	10 mins
Activity 5 Professional learning	Using Lofthouse's model to think about professional learning.	20 mins

Learning outcomes

By the end of this week, you should be able to:

- recognise that mentoring can be viewed as a continuum
- consider how your mentoring relationship with your beginner teacher may change and grow
- consider how theory can be applied to practice as a mentor
- reflect on how mentoring is part of professional learning.

1 Growing with your mentee – mentoring as a continuum

A beginner teacher must first familiarise themselves with what is expected of them, the routines within school and how classes are organised and taught. A period of consolidation follows as the beginner teacher works to understand more clearly their role in school, and gradually they move towards autonomy, taking on the role and responsibilities of a teacher.

Beginner teachers' progress as they enter and proceed through their practice learning can be conceptualised as:

Figure 1 The beginner teacher's journey towards autonomy

> **Reflection point**
>
> - How does the role of a mentor change as the beginner teacher progresses through this continuum?

Effective mentoring at all stages of the beginner teacher's progress requires a mixture of support and challenge. Good mentors recognise when to support and when to challenge. According to Daloz (1989), mentor support affirms a beginner teacher's experiences and builds trust, whereas challenge requires trust in the beginner teacher. Offering challenge sometimes means that contradictory ideas are introduced and tacit assumptions are questioned. Some tension may develop, but this can support the development of agency in the beginner teacher. Daloz (1989) argues that any interchange between a mentor and a mentee can and indeed should involve both challenge and support, and that what may be perceived as support by one beginner teacher could be viewed as challenge by another. He presents Figure 2 to suggest that growth occurs when both high challenge and high support are given.
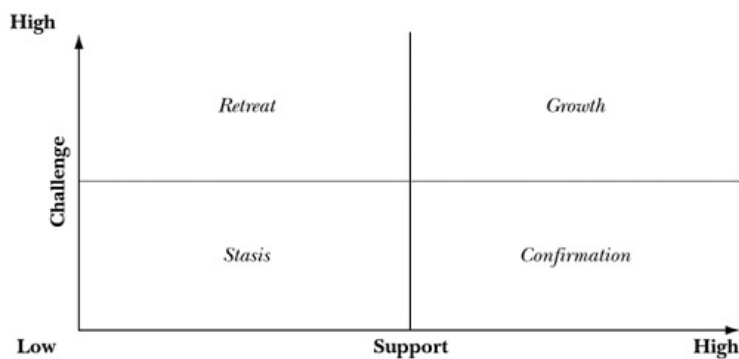
Figure 2 The outcomes of varying levels of support and challenge (Daloz, 1989)

Activity 1 Support or challenge?

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Consider each scenario and note how you might offer support or challenge.

Scenario	Support	Challenge
A beginner teacher beginning first placement offers to teach all the lessons for a particular class/subject because he/she wants to become fully involved from the start.	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
A beginner teacher lacks confidence in teaching a particular class/subject.	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
A beginner teacher reprimands a learner with additional learning needs for not trying hard enough, leading to a loss of confidence in the learner and a complaint from the parent.	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
A beginner teacher wants to try a new set of resources that he/she has discovered, but you feel they may be problematic with a particular class.	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

Challenging and supporting the beginner teacher you mentor will help them to grow; at the same time, your skills and capabilities as a mentor must grow. This is discussed next.

1.1 Mentoring relationships: growth as a mentor

How might the challenge and support you offer as a mentor change at the different stages of a beginner teacher's journey, ensuring their continued growth as demonstrated in Figure 2? How might the ideas in Figure 2 also help you to continue to grow as a mentor? Who might support and challenge you? How might having beginner teachers and mentors at different stages of their development – for example, a mentor at the familiarisation stage with a beginner teacher who is ready for autonomy – impact the relationship?

Haggar and McIntyre (2006) argue that in a mentoring relationship, beginner teachers may not:

- recognise what they need to learn
- ask for ideas or information
- understand how they can apply ideas observed in experienced teachers' practice to their own teaching.

In turn, experienced teachers may take their 'tacit and intuitive expertise' for granted and not draw attention to what the beginner teacher needs to know. This may mean time is not given to important aspects, such as sharing thinking about complex planning and teaching decisions. It is true that beginner teachers often want quick solutions to problems, but mentors must supply the support and challenge that will allow beginner teachers to understand the complex nature of teaching. The mentor's role is to ask the questions that allow the beginner teacher to relate the specific contexts observed and the teachers' reasoning for their decisions, building an understanding of the teachers' craft knowledge. This will be explored further in Week 3. Discussing the reasoning behind decision-making can be difficult at first because of the tacit and intuitive nature of these decisions, but the benefits of focused discussion in supporting beginner teachers' understanding and in developing autonomy cannot be overstated.

Activity 2 Symbiotic relationships

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

Watch the short audio clip of Kellie talking about the symbiotic relationship between mentor and mentee.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1 Kellie: Symbiotic relationships

Reflect on what it means to grow as a mentor. How much does working with your beginner contribute to that growth? What else will help you to grow as a mentor?

Write a reflective piece on what has helped or may help you grow as a mentor in the box below. Consider sharing your ideas with a fellow mentor or someone who has mentored you and asking them if they feel the same.

> *Provide your answer...*

Several authors have developed theories which apply to mentoring, and which will help you reflect on the relationship you have with your beginner teacher as they grow in the profession. The next section will discuss these theories.

2 Theories of mentoring

The aim of the relationship between mentor and beginner teacher is to allow the beginner teacher to learn and take their place in an ever-evolving and complex profession. According to Cain (2009), there are two theories of mentoring: the first is that the mentor promotes learning by reflection, and the second is that learning occurs through an apprenticeship model. Both of these resonate with the idea of nurturing a beginner teacher into taking on the role of a teacher. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) see learning as a growing participation in a community of practice that may better theorise the complexities of the mentor's role in helping a student develop their professional identity as a teacher.

2.1 Learning by reflection

Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987) are perhaps the best-known theorists who see reflection as an important tool in professional learning. Reflection can enable a beginner teacher to relate theoretical ideas or the ideas promoted by a national curriculum to the hurly-burly of the classroom. It is a way to more closely align a beginner teacher's professional actions with the values that they espouse.

Essentially reflection is seen 'as a good thing', but also as a habit of mind that is difficult to achieve at sufficient depth to make a difference. Beginner teachers may reflect on their experience and use reflection to seek solutions to complex problems. Exploring 'their ideal' and what factors might limit the achievement of that ideal can prompt the depth of reflection that will lead to learning. In this theory, the mentor's role is to prompt the beginner teacher to explore and make overt their inner beliefs and values, in order to activate their competencies and plan new and improved ways of acting within the classroom.

There are difficulties with basing mentoring on this theory. These include finding a reflective space in school in which to explore beliefs and feelings in this way, and also finding the time necessary to build solutions to issues. Time is a big issue for the mentoring relationship, especially when the student needs something organised, wants your views on how to teach a difficult concept, needs a form signed, and so on.

Activity 3 Supporting reflection in different situations

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Consider the scenarios below and identify how you might support reflection in each situation.

Scenario	How might I support reflection effectively?
You are undertaking work in the classroom while the beginner teacher takes the last lesson of the day. The beginner teacher sets work that is too easy for the learners, and they start to become disengaged. You have a meeting straight after school and will not see the beginner teacher until the next day.	*Provide your answer...*
The beginner teacher decides to try a new approach to group work, which results in disruption in the lesson; you feel you need to intervene to prevent further disruption.	*Provide your answer...*

A beginner teacher shares some learner work which he/ she is particularly pleased with, but you feel the beginner teacher has not taken into account the prior learning of the class.

Provide your answer...

A beginner teacher is highly self-critical, completing every lesson with a list of things that went wrong.

Provide your answer...

Rather than simply telling them what needs to be done, it's usually far more effective to ask questions in a way that encourages beginner teachers to reflect and recognise for themselves where development is needed. Creating opportunities for an open discussion, encouraging the beginner teacher to consider why something might have occurred, is the best mentoring practice – but often the timing of such conversations needs careful consideration. Meeting immediately after a disastrous lesson may not be the most appropriate time to dissect what happened, although the beginner teacher is likely to need some reassurance. Waiting some time can bring perspective, as the beginner teacher can process their immediate feelings, allowing deeper reflection to take place.

Beginner teachers may need to be supported in recognising positive aspects of their teaching. Encouraging initial discussion about positives and where progress has been made will usually allow an honest discussion of points for development to take place, resulting in the creation of specific, achievable targets.

When time is precious, questions that encourage deep reflection could be jotted onto lesson planning or in a notebook that may be shared with the beginner teacher. For example, questions that ask the beginner teacher to consider why something happened in a lesson could be jotted down in the moment, and then followed up in a regular meeting.

2.2 Learning through apprenticeship

There are those who view teaching as a craft (e.g. Brown and McIntyre, 1993) and see learning to teach as an apprenticeship, in which experience improves performance and learning is a slow process. In this theory, the mentor is viewed as a master craftsperson guiding the beginner teacher into taking on more and more complex roles (Brown and McIntyre, 1993). The mentor advises, directs and offers practical tips in order to enable the beginner teacher to make good decisions in the essential immediacy of the classroom. The beginner teacher learns by observing and imitating how the mentor relates to students, positions themselves, uses the board, and so on.

Such a theoretical description fits well with the way that many mentors see themselves as not just supporting, but actively teaching beginner teachers, through advising, informing and suggesting practical approaches. Mentors also act as assessors, giving feedback on lessons and making summative assessments of the beginner teachers' progress. These dual roles can be a source of tension: some mentors find the roles of supporter and judge to be at odds with one another.

This theory receives criticism. Mentors in general do not want their beginner teachers to become a 'mini-me' but rather to take on their own professional identity. Mentors also see that the complex, relationship-dependant profession of teaching is not about giving useful tips or passing on 'one size fits all' solutions, but is rather an intellectually demanding pursuit requiring commitment, passion and creativity.

2.3 Learning as acquiring a professional identity within a community of practice

In both the new Welsh and Scottish Curriculum, teachers are required to exercise high degrees of professional agency (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015). Agency is not something that someone has. Rather, it is something the teacher is allowed and encouraged to exercise within the resources offered by the context in which they act, thereby developing a professional identity within a community of those that exercise such agency.

Professional identity is an ongoing process of making sense of and reinterpreting values and experiences (Flores and Day, 2006). The beginner teacher must come to see themselves as a teacher (Coldron and Smith, 2010); they must acquire and redefine an identity that is legitimised by the community of which they form a part. Agency is required in order to develop an identity as a teacher: to become a teacher, a beginner teacher must be allowed and encouraged to participate as a decision maker within the community of the school.

Lave and Wenger (1991) see a teacher's professional identity as being formed through legitimate peripheral participation in the community of the school. Seen in this way, becoming a teacher requires movement from peripheral participation to full membership by mastering skills, knowledge and sociocultural practices. A beginner teacher takes part in a range of experiences, develops relationships and encounters ways of behaving, allowing them to become a full member of that community.

Thinking about learning as induction into a community of practice requires the mentor's role to be facilitating the beginner teacher's sense of belonging to and their ability to exercise agency within the community. Unequal relations of power (Lave and Wenger, 1991) are inherent within communities of practice – the mentor's role is to welcome the novice into the community, and support and legitimise their movement from peripheral to full participation in active membership of the community.

Teaching is a complex endeavour, and learning to teach is equally complex. Any attempt to simplify this approach is likely to risk losing some vital part of the undertaking.

2.4 The three theories of mentoring

The three theories of how mentors may support beginner teachers' learning do not have to be mutually exclusive. Furlong and Maynard (1995) suggest that mentors may alternate between apprenticeship and reflection theories, starting more apprentice-like and moving towards more reflective approaches. This may be seen as particularly appropriate as a mentor inducts a beginner teacher from peripheral to full participation in the community of practice that is a school. Taking the stance of co-inquirer (Smith, 2010) into how practice within all aspects of the mentoring relationship can grow may well offer a good basis for this complex relationship.

Activity 4 Theories into practice

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

Using the same scenarios as in Activity 3, consider how you might respond if you were strictly following each theoretical position in mentoring. Fill in your ideas in the empty boxes. Some have been done for you to give you some ideas.

Scenario	Actions that may promote learning by reflection	Actions that may promote learning as apprenticeship	Actions that may promote learning as becoming part of a community
1. You are undertaking work in the classroom while the beginner-teacher takes the last lesson of the day. The beginner-teacher sets work that is too easy for the learners, and they start to become disengaged.	Question beginner teacher as to what they felt had happened to lead to the disengagement.	Tell the beginner teacher they need to have more challenging work available in case this happens again and where you look to find that work.	Set up an observation for the beginner teacher of how another teacher who is known for their expertise in assessing prior knowledge so that the work is better aligned to what the students need.

2. The beginner teacher decides to try a new approach to group work, which results in disruption in the lesson; you feel you need to intervene to prevent further disruption.

Provide your answer...

Take over the organisation and settling of the groups so that the beginner-teacher can see how it is done then tell the class that they will lead the rest of the lesson.

Provide your answer...

3. A beginner-teacher shares some learner work which he/she is particularly pleased with, but you feel the beginner-teacher has not taken into account the prior learning of the class.

Ask the beginner teacher how they will know that the class are ready to use these ideas in their class.

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

3 Professional learning for mentor growth

Lofthouse (2018) proposed a practice development model for individual professional learning through mentoring. The professional learning through mentoring shown in the model is complex and interrelated as both the mentor and beginner teacher develop their practice together. Mentoring is often experienced as activity, sometimes highly productive, sometimes rather repetitive and always undertaken in the midst of other professional or training activity.
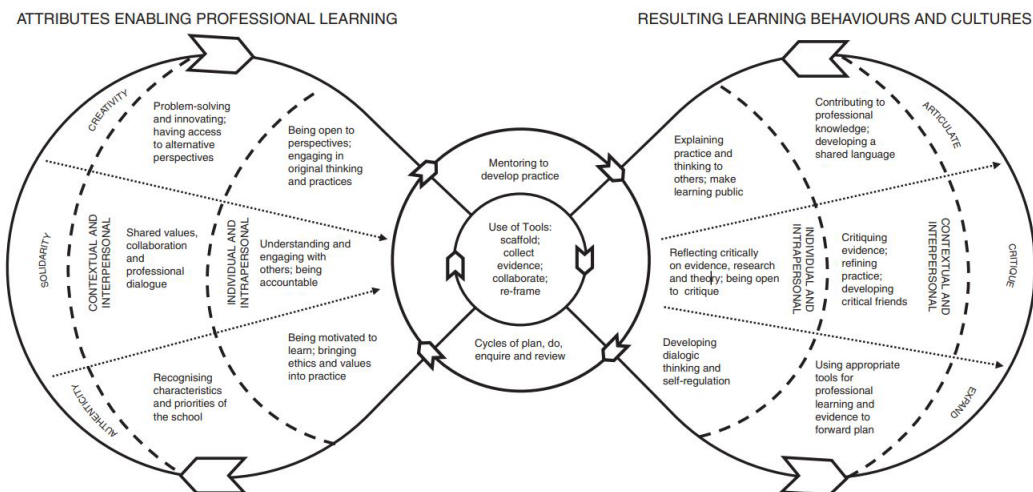
ATTRIBUTES ENABLING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

RESULTING LEARNING BEHAVIOURS AND CULTURES

Figure 3 Lofthouse's (2018) model for practice development through teaching

On the left-hand side of the model are the enablers of professional learning, including institutional and interpersonal cultural conditions and individual and intrapersonal personal attributes. At the centre is mentoring. The right-hand side of the model shows the practices that both mentor and beginner teacher should be willing and able to engage in to promote professional learning. The shape and arrows on the model represent the cumulative effects of learning and growth, which sustain and renew opportunities for professional learning through mentoring cycles, with the potential that each cycle allows for further practice development.

Activity 5 Professional learning

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Look closely at Lofthouse's professional development model in Figure 3. Note particular examples of the theoretical concepts that may be evident in the mentor's and beginner teachers practice or development. Some examples have been added as a start for you.

Theoretical concept	… in the mentor's practice/ and or development	… in the beginner teacher's practice/and or development
A growing and changing relationship	*Provide your answer...*	Developing critical friends

Support and challenge	*Provide your answer...*	Problem solving and innovating
Learning by reflection	Explaining practice and thinking to others	*Provide your answer...*
Learning through apprenticeship	Understanding and engaging with others	*Provide your answer...*
Learning as acquiring a professional identity within a community of practice	*Provide your answer...*	Developing dialogic thinking and self-regulation

Professional learning will always involve aspects of research, whether that means engaging with others' learning from research, engaging in research yourself, or both.

4 How can mentors use research?

Cain (2009) makes four suggestions about how mentors can make use of research and theory in the development of their own practice, and in their support and challenge of beginner teachers. He suggests mentoring can be better understood:

1. through the mentors' reading and understanding of research
2. by using theoretical frameworks – such as the one used by Lofthouse (2018)
3. by considering case studies and what they may tell us
4. by mentors undertaking an inquiry into their own practice.

Reflection point

Consider Cain's suggestions above.

*   Which have you engaged in recently?
*   Which do you think would be valuable as you grow into your role?
*   Which could you employ during your time as a mentor?

5 Week 2 summary

In this week of the course you have looked at the stages of the journey that every beginning teacher must go through as they move towards taking their place in the professional community of teachers. You have considered how essential it is to both support and challenge your mentee to be sure that they grow at a pace appropriate for them.

You have also looked at how research into mentoring has provided different models for the relationship. You've thought about how you see yourself as a mentor, and how best to enable the professional learning beginning teachers need. This week finished with a brief look at how mentors can make use of research and theory in their role.

You can now go to Week 3.

Week 3: Moving mentoring towards coaching

Introduction

This week you will consider how the relationship between mentor and mentee may change and develop over time, drawing on the concept of mentoring as a continuum, as discussed in Week 2.

Over time, the relationship between mentor and mentee will change and develop. As part of this change, the mentor may move towards a coaching role. This is seen as a role more aligned with supporting someone who is beginning to take on the role and identity of a teacher: a beginner teacher who is towards the 'autonomous' end of the continuum.

It is widely acknowledged that both the terms 'mentor' and 'coach' are not easily defined. In addition, both terms are sometimes mistakenly interchanged (Mullen, 2012). Certainly, there are many similarities between the roles of mentor and coach. For example, in an educational context, both mentor and coach are involved with:

- supporting a fellow professional
- facilitating professional development
- building a working relationship
- discussing ideas with trust, respect and openness.

(Ng, 2012, p. 25)

This week you will look at how a coaching role may look within a school-based setting, and how effective use of coaching techniques can support early career teachers in the initial teacher education and newly qualified phases.

Activity planner

Activity	Learning actions	Time
Activity 1 Mentoring or coaching?	Understanding the difference between mentoring and coaching.	10 mins
Activity 2 A coaching dialogue	Looking at and rephrasing questions.	2 x 15 mins
Activity 3 Developing listening skills	Watch a video and list four or five action points.	10 mins

Activity 4 Improving coaching dialogue	Using coaching techniques in practice.	20 mins
Activity 5 Observing and supporting	Outline your thoughts on lesson observation.	20 mins

Learning outcomes

By the end of this week, you should be able to:

- articulate the principles of effective coaching
- reflect on how coaching can support professional development
- make informed decisions about which techniques to try in your own context.

1 Coaching within a school-based setting

The terms 'coach' and 'mentor' have different nuances in different fields: they may mean different things when used in an educational context compared to business, counselling or sport, for example. Even within education, there are different interpretations of the mentoring and coaching roles. Lancer, Clutterbuck and Megginson (2016) believe that the confusion between terms has arisen because of the complex nature of both coaching and mentoring, and due to the wide range of coaching and mentoring approaches, with elements of these overlapping.

As an experienced teacher supporting a beginner teacher's professional development, you may have an opportunity to work with different ITE providers. In doing so, you will come across a profusion of labels for the roles of mentor/coach. In a review of literature on mentoring provision in Wales, commonly used terms were found to be: cooperating teacher; mentor teacher; supervisor and assessor (Bethell et al., 2020). It is also the case that beginner teachers may be called by various terms, including: student-teacher; trainee teacher; early career teacher or beginning teacher (Hobson and Malderez, 2013).

To aid in understanding how coaching differs from mentoring, this course will draw on the research of Lofthouse *et al*. (2010) on developing coaching among teachers. Read the following quote to help you complete Activity 1.

It is widely accepted that mentoring usually takes place at significant career events, such as induction and taking on new roles, it has an element of gatekeeping and the mentor is almost always someone more senior in the organisation and indeed there is an organisational motive for the process. Coaching … is associated with developing repertoire through focused experimenting with new classroom strategies and often has the objective of assisting in the development of open and collaborative cultures. Coaches do not have to be senior staff just someone with particular expertise and they should be supportive and not judgemental.

Lofthouse et al., 2010, p. 7

Activity 1 Mentoring or coaching?

⏱ *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

To help clarify your understanding of how coaching and mentoring may differ, read the short scenarios below and indicate whether you think they are examples of mentoring or coaching.

Often takes place at a key development point within a teacher's career.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

Goals will be discussed and agreed, perhaps in relation to external targets.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

May involve two similarly positioned staff members collaborating on an area of development.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

Involves a more senior member of staff guiding a fellow professional.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

Usually used to support autonomous professional development.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

May involve one professional making a judgement on another.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

Often involves one professional making a judgement on another.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

An individual's goals will be self-determined.
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Coaching

This activity has demonstrated a few aspects that will be used to differentiate mentoring and coaching on this course, as well as when either is an appropriate role to take in enabling a beginner teacher to move towards autonomy. The next section will discuss more about coaching.

2 Applications of coaching

In general, coaching techniques are used when a fellow professional can work autonomously and determine their own development needs or goals. When supporting teachers during the initial teacher education phase, a move from mentoring to coaching would take place towards the latter part of their university course, when a certain level of competence has been met.

2.1 Providing appropriate challenge

As was seen in Week 2, whether taking a mentoring or a coaching stance, there is a need to strike a balance between support and challenge.

Providing appropriate challenge is considered to play 'a crucial role in supporting the student teachers' learning' (Mutton, Burn and Hagger, 2008, p. 78). As you aim to provide appropriate challenge, research shows that effective practice should include:

- the development of knowledge and expertise in a progressive and systematic way (da Cunha, Batista and Graca, 2018)
- ensuring that guidance and support is provided (Lofthouse and Thomas, 2017)
- taking a collaborative and co-enquiry approach.

Within these practices, professional dialogue and effective use of questioning are considered to be key elements (Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010; Fletcher, 2012).

3 Dialogue in coaching

In this section, you will consider how a coach can support independent professional development by using carefully considered questions rather than offering solutions. A conversation between coach and coachee becomes a 'coaching conversation' when it takes the form of professional dialogue rather than an ad-hoc conversation (Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010).

A 'coaching conversation' should:

1.   have a purpose/intention
2.   be focused on the coachee, their strengths and challenges
3.   aim to ensure professional development and change.

(Based on Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010, p. 3)

You may occasionally come across a situation that gives you cause for concern. In these instances, it will be necessary to change tack and resume a mentoring role. Specific guidance may sometimes be needed as the beginner teacher could be unsure about how to develop their practice. However, the guidance should be given from a supportive standpoint and many of the principles of effective dialogue can be used when taking either a mentoring or a coaching stance.

The use of questioning plays a central role in the dialogue between coach and coachee, as questions may be used to draw out ideas and actions (Fletcher, 2012). Use of open questions can support the practice of reflecting on a learning experience. Offering solutions should be avoided by the coach. Giving advice can undermine confidence – the coachee should be viewed as being capable of finding their own solutions (Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010, p. 13). As a result, questions should not lead the coachee into one way of thinking or indicate that a judgement has been made.

In the following activity, consider how you could adapt the questions to move from an advice-giving perspective to one of prompting learning.

Activity 2 A coaching dialogue

⏱ *Allow approximately 30 minutes*

The coach's role is to build confidence and autonomy, by emphasising that the coachee is capable of finding their own solutions. Read each of the following questions and consider why they might undermine an early career teacher's confidence.

1.   Do you think changing pupil groupings could help with classroom management problems?
2.   Have you thought about giving pupils more thinking time?
3.   Are you aware of the range of Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques we use at our school?
4.   Would you agree that the plenary needs adapting?
5.   How about including more experiential learning activities in your sessions?

Provide your answer...

....

Discussion

1.   This is an example of a leading question and the coach is giving a strong suggestion about the necessary course of action.
2.   With this type of loaded question, the coach is controlling the direction of the discussion.
3.   This question could undermine confidence as it suggests that the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) is limited.
4.   Another loaded question, conveying a negative opinion of the plenary.
5.   This could almost be interpreted as a statement; the coach is driving the agenda and the direction of change.

Now consider the questions from a coaching perspective. Rewrite the questions so that they might improve the quality of dialogue and non-judgemental support given.

1.   Do you think changing pupil groupings could help with classroom management problems?
2.   Have you thought about giving pupils more thinking time?
3.   Are you aware of the range of Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques we use at our school?
4.   Would you agree that the plenary needs adapting?
5.   How about including more experiential learning activities in your sessions?

Provide your answer...

While asking the right questions in the right way is important in establishing a coaching dialogue, listening to what the beginner teacher is trying to discuss may be even more important. The next section discusses the art of listening.

4 The art of listening

When a question is asked, really listening to the answer is vital in establishing true dialogue. Being able to listen may seem simple and straightforward, but truly listening – without interrupting or making any possibly unwanted suggestions – can be surprisingly difficult.

Non-judgemental listening ensures the coachee has space to reflect and think of actions or next steps. Within a coaching dialogue, the coach's ability to listen is considered particularly important (Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010; Whitmore, 2010).

This notion of 'committed' listening is also considered to be an integral part of 'developing relational trust' (Cheliotes and Reilly, 2010, p. 25). Such focused listening does not mean that you necessarily agree with everything that is being said, but you are avoiding making a judgement while showing respect towards the speaker's views (Edge, 2015).

Activity 3 Developing listening skills

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

The aim of this activity is to help you reflect on your listening practices. It is not always easy to listen:

- with empathy
- prepared to allow for silence
- without offering personal views and opinions.

Watch the following video and then create a list of four or five action points that could help you become a listening coach (make sure to open this link in a new tab/window so you can easily return to this page). How To Improve Your Listening Skills

Provide your answer...

Establishing a coaching dialogue requires asking the right questions and listening to the answers. In the next section, two models will be discussed that may support you in the difficult task of establishing a coaching dialogue.

5 Scaffolding the dialogue

Engaging in conversations with the purpose of supporting educational improvement can be challenging (Earl and Timperley, 2009). The complexities coaches face are also acknowledged in other fields and, as a result, different fields have adopted models that can be used to support coaches. This section will briefly introduce two models that could help you scaffold your discussions as a coach.

5.1 The GROW model

Originating in the field of business (Whitmore, 2010), this model has been adopted by schools and other education settings (Fletcher, 2012). The acronym is used as a four-step tool to structure the coaching conversation, but the order may vary:

> *G* – *Goal setting*. What are the aims of the discussion? What are the areas for improvement?
>
> *R* – *Reality check*. Discussing the current situation.
>
> *O* – *Options available*. Possible solutions or steps to take.
>
> *W* – *Wrap up*. What is the course of action? What steps will be taken – by whom and by when?

(Based on Whitmore, 2010, p. 48)

5.2 The RESULTS model

Another acronym-based model designed to scaffold conversations when coaching as a school leader (Kee et al., 2010). Each letter represents a step in a process that could be adapted to different situations.

R – *Resolve to change results*. A decision that change is needed.

E – *Establish goal clarity*. There is a specific aim.

S – *Seek integrity*. A trusting and open commitment to change.

U – *Unveil multiple pathways*. Considering different options or approaches to achieving the aim.

L – *Leverage options*. Prioritising which approach to take.

T – *Take action*. Acting on the chosen approach.

S – *Seize success*. Monitoring progress, acknowledging and celebrating when a goal has been met.

(Based on Kee et al., 2010)

There are countless coaching models to consider, but a coach could also be successful without adopting a prescribed approach. As a professional, you will be best placed to make informed decisions about which techniques you wish to try in your own context.

Activity 4 Improving coaching dialogue

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Consider your own context of supporting beginner teachers in the initial teacher education or newly qualified phases: are there elements of coaching techniques you could consider using to improve your own coaching dialogue?

Reflect on your experiences and note possible changes you could make to your dialogue techniques in the box below.

Provide your answer...

Supporting beginner teachers as a mentor will always involve judging their practice. Most of the time this will be in order to offer appropriate support, but the next section discusses the full meaning of assessment as a mentor.

6 The role of assessment

Unlike coaching activity between qualified teachers, assessment forms an important part of supporting beginner teachers. The element of assessment can add pressure on all involved parties.

In university-based ITE, a mentor or coach will play a socialising role. The role is one of helping to make sense of both educational and learning theory, and also their links to pedagogy and practice. In addition, school-based mentors/coaches are often asked to assess the competence of the early career teacher against a set of standards (e.g. the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) standards). In this case, they act as gatekeepers of acceptance into the teaching profession.

When assessing early career teachers, coaching techniques can be applied to promote independent learning and a recognition of next steps. Discussing and co-constructing understanding of a classroom situation (i.e. a coaching style) has been found to promote development (Furlong and Maynard, 1995).

On the other hand, providing an excess of judgements and evaluations can prove to be an obstacle in school-based mentoring/coaching relationships. Adopting an assessor's role provides challenge for the early career teacher, but little or no support. This has been termed 'judge mentoring' (Hobson and Malderez, 2013) and is considered an impediment to both the professional learning and wellbeing of early career teachers.

The need to balance support and challenge was discussed earlier, along with some techniques that can promote more balanced professional discussions. Research suggests that being able to practice their roles without fear of failure (Bauer et al., 2007), and in the absence of a performance climate (Černe, Jaklič and Škerlavaj, 2013), is beneficial to both early career teachers (in terms of extending or challenging their own range of pedagogies) and their schools (by keeping up to date with recent trends and evidence-based pedagogies).

Lesson observation is a common form of assessment for early career teachers. Love (2020) identifies four key lesson observation types:

- absent
- brutal
- collegial
- inspection.

Reflecting on each of these different types of lesson observation is useful when you are seeking to support an early career teacher. The next activity will support you as you deliberate on how the way observations are conducted can impact those being observed.

Activity 5 Observing and supporting

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

This activity outlines the characteristics of the four types of lesson observation identified by Love (2020). As you read each one, consider the observation experience from the perspective of the person being observed. For example, how will this type of observation and feedback impact their development or their wellbeing?

Write brief notes to outline your thoughts.

Type of observation	Likely purpose of the observation	Characteristics of the observation	Characteristics of the feedback
Absent	To check that the teacher is carrying out school 'non-negotiables' and the level of student engagement.	Unannounced, short, drop-in style observation, less than 20 minutes in length – could have several in a day and more than one in a lesson.	Either non-existent or minimal, usually a copy of the observation pro-forma attached to an email. Usually graded 1–4 according to inspectorate criteria.

Possible impact of an absent-type observation on the observed:

Provide your answer...

Brutal	To assess teacher capabilities and check they are carrying out the school 'non-negotiables' and the level of student engagement.	Planned or unannounced observation lasting 20 minutes or longer.	Non-developmental, delivered with little or no empathy, observer lists what the teacher has done wrong or not done, with little or no suggestions on how to improve. Usually graded 1–4.

Possible impact of a brutal-type observation on the observed:

Provide your answer...

Collegial	To help teacher development with issues such as behaviour or trying new teaching strategies.	Agreed time and class, could be short or a longer observation depending on agreed purpose.	Developmental/two-way conversation that allows teacher to explain their choices and concerns, ungraded.

Possible impact of a collegial-type observation on the observed:

Provide your answer...

Inspection	To assess teaching across the school.	Short, drop-in or longer unannounced observations.	May be non-graded, usually developmental with suggestions on how to improve.

Possible impact of an inspection-type observation on the observed:

Provide your answer...

Ideally, assessment of beginner teachers should be a mix of collegial- and inspection-type lesson observations. Key aspects to include within an effective observation are:

- an agreed purpose
- a willingness to try things out
- the promotion of positive self-esteem
- constructive feedback to support future development.

7 Week 3 summary

The complex relationship between mentor and mentee is highly rewarding, and provides significant rewards in terms of the professional development of the mentee and the mentor. As the beginner teacher moves towards taking on the full role of a teacher, the role the mentor takes could be more accurately called a coaching role – and what this means has been discussed in this week.

As part of discussing a coaching dialogue, the vital skills of asking the right questions in the right way and listening to the answer have been emphasised. When mentoring or coaching is approached intentionally and empathetically, it has the power to inspire and instil in the beginner teacher the desire to take their teaching and the profession forward.

You can now go to Week 4.

Week 4: The mentor's role in professional learning

Introduction

Figure 1 A word cloud of words associated with mentoring and coaching

Having an effective mentor can make all the difference to a beginner teacher, allowing them to grow from someone who is unfamiliar with the role of a teacher into an autonomous professional. In this final week, you will study the idea of strategic mentoring and how it can fit into the whole school, and the principles of effective mentoring. Finally, you will be asked to reflect back on your learning throughout the course, and consider how you might move forward in becoming the kind of mentor you would like to be.

Activity planner

Activity	Learning actions	Time
Activity 1 Personalised mentoring	Consider a scenario and write a 200-word reflection.	20 mins
Activity 2 The twelve principles of mentoring	Watch a video and place in order the 12 principles of mentoring.	10 mins
Activity 3 The benefits of mentoring	Watch a video on the benefits of mentoring.	5 mins
Activity 4 Reflecting on your own mentoring practice	Watch a video and return to initial audit.	40 mins

Learning outcomes

By the end of this week, you should be able to:

- consider strategic mentoring and a whole-school approach
- reflect on the principles of effective mentoring and how coaching can support professional development
- reflect on your own practice as a mentor.

1 Strategic mentoring

It can be hard to strike a balance between being an effective mentor and keeping up with the paperwork and your own teaching workload. If the mentee is making good progress then they can be a huge benefit while, at the other end of the spectrum, some mentees will double your workload and present multiple challenges. As a mentor you may be the difference that stops a talented student quitting when the going gets tough, or you might find yourself having to have a difficult conversation about alternative careers. But, overall, if you get the balance right there is nothing better than enabling others to succeed.

As a mentor, you must be available: ensure you make time to see how things are going and if any planning needs tweaking. But you must set boundaries: perhaps you will allow the beginner teacher to contact you at evenings and weekends, but only when you say. Be strategic, because both you and the beginner teacher are human.

Figure 2 Getting the balance right is key for a successful mentor

You will give feedback that sometimes will be challenging and could be seen as negative. While it is important to highlight the strengths of your beginner teacher, as they can often be hard on themselves, honest feedback is needed, especially when the beginner teacher is struggling with a class or group of learners. It is important not to over-exaggerate positive features to compensate for significant weaknesses. Be sensitive when a lesson goes horribly wrong: as long as it's not a regular feature, teach your beginner teacher to chalk it up to experience. Encourage self-reflection and reiterate what a challenging (yet rewarding) job it is.

Being strategic is also about recognising when the beginner teacher's needs would be better met by someone else within or beyond the school. Mentoring should be seen as a whole-school job and the whole school should celebrate when they succeed. Look for opportunities for the beginner teacher to develop: if the school up the road has amazing English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision, organise a visit. If they need to see PE in another key stage, encourage them to organise it. Do not do everything for them. Check their folders and paperwork regularly in mentor meetings, but they must check they have taught/observed the right lessons for writing up assignments or meeting standards themselves.

1.1 Mentoring at differing stages

Mentoring strategically means providing the mentoring or coaching that the particular beginner teacher needs at the particular point they have reached in their career. Consider the scenario where two beginner teachers who are at different points in their studies are placed in your school, and you are mentoring both. One student is exceeding expectations (first school placement on a part-time programme) while the other is only doing enough to reach the desired requirements (second school placement at the latter stage of their course). How do you ensure both continue to make progress?

Ensuring both students are treated as individuals is vital, and this means avoiding comparisons and group discussions when giving feedback, as this would be unethical.

You will also need to build a clear understanding of the expectations at each level of study, as this will be imperative in order to advise and set appropriate and achievable targets. Making sure each student is given appropriate observation opportunities is important, so that both students are able to benefit from seeing and learning from experienced staff at work. You will also need to engage in discussions with the school co-ordinator / practice tutor during visits to gain some personal coaching on dealing with the challenging circumstances involved.

Activity 1 Personalised mentoring

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Considering the scenario given above, how would you ensure a personalised approach for each beginner teacher?

Write a short 200-word description explaining your response.

Provide your answer...

Considering the values that you hold as a mentor and the principles within which you wish to act will be important as you deal with difficult situations and support beginner teachers. The next section will help you to determine your principles.

2 Principles of effective mentoring

Being an effective mentor requires much from anyone who takes on this role, and their school must understand the extent of what is needed. This section will clarify the principles of effective mentoring.

Watch the video where Dr Matthew Dicken outlines the 12 principles of mentoring.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1 Dr Matthew Dicken

Video clip 1

The 12 principles of mentoring

- **1 Accountability and responsibility:** It is the role of both the mentor and mentee to keep each other accountable for the roles and responsibilities that are undertaken.
- **2 Commitment and diligence:** It is the role of both parties to be committed and diligent. The mentee must be diligent in pursuit of their goals. The mentor must be committed and diligent in showing that they value the mentee.
- **3 Communication and co-operation:** Formal discussion and casual talking is key to the success of this framework. Both parties must seek to keep the channels of communication open and work out differences if they occur.
- **4 Understanding and relationship building:** As the mentor and mentee get to know each other better, it is important that they demonstrate an interest in one another and attempt to understand each other with empathy.
- **5 Encouragement and feedback:** It is the role of the mentor to be balanced in their feedback by encouraging and teasing out areas of possible weakness and development. It is the role of the mentee to receive feedback positively.
- **6 Trust and honesty:** When discussing, it is important that both mentor and mentee can trust each other, and therefore share with honesty.
- **7 Independence:** It is the role of the mentee to think for themselves and the role of the mentor not to be overbearing and categorically stipulate at any point in the journey.
- **8 Innovation and willingness to change:** It is the role of both mentee and mentor to think about new directions and new ideas. The mentor has the responsibility to be willing to change and develop.
- **9 Integrity and excellence:** It is the role of both parties involved to do the right thing, and to do so to the best of their abilities. Both mentor and mentee should be motivated by the concept of striving for excellence.
- **10 Motivation and driving force:** It is important that both the mentee and mentor remain focused and intentional in their thinking and actions.

- **11 Reflection and evaluation:** It is both people's roles to take time to reflect and intentionally think about the ideas that come out of discussion. Similarly, it is both the mentor and mentee's role to evaluate developments.
- **12 Tolerance and respect:** Each of us has different thoughts and beliefs. As such, it is the role of both mentor and mentee to value each other's opinions and perspectives.

Activity 2 The twelve principles of mentoring

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

Place the principles in the order of your personal priorities, according to your needs as a school:

Accountability and responsibility; Commitment and diligence; Communication and co-operation; Understanding and relationship building; Encouragement and feedback; Trust and honesty; Independence; Innovation and willingness to change; Integrity and excellence; Motivation and driving force; Reflection and evaluation; Tolerance and respect.

You can type them or copy the list into the box below.

Provide your answer...

Mentoring requires a principled stance, especially when dealing with the difficulties that beginner teachers sometimes experience, but it is a rewarding role. The next section considers the potential rewards.

3 Mentoring: what's in it for me?

Mentoring is often seen to have a valuable role in teachers' own professional development. A mentor's knowledge and expertise provides a wealth of opportunities for beginner teachers to learn from throughout their early careers (HMIE Scotland, 2008) and, as was seen in Week 2, it is a two-way process where students learn from mentors and mentors learn from their students. Mentoring requires making overt what up to now has been tacit knowledge, and understanding of the way that the classroom works and the teacher within it. Mentors come to a fuller understanding of their own expertise, which in turn gives the mentor confidence as they work with the beginner teacher in school and in their wider roles within school and across schools.

Activity 3 The benefits of mentoring

🕐 *Allow approximately 5 minutes*

Watch the video of Sarah Jennings talking about the benefits of mentoring.

> Video content is not available in this format.
> **Video 2** Sarah Jennings
>
> Video clip 2
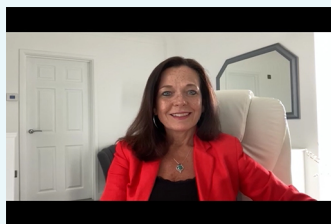
As a mentor, continuing professional development (CPD) and networking opportunities are part and parcel of the role. Mentoring often extends beyond the school gates, and affords opportunities for collaboration with external stakeholders and other institutions and individuals. Mentors will often collaborate with other schools, allowing for cross-pollination of expertise and support. Mentoring can also heighten one's own reflective stance and practices through observation and discussion. It can also be an opportunity to further your own career development and create more extensive networks, as seen in the example below. Mentors help the beginner teacher to understand and use research to innovate in their teaching, and potentially collaborate in action-research projects in their school and beyond through collaboration with partner institutions.

Activity 4 Reflecting on your own mentoring practice

🕐 *Allow approximately 40 minutes*

Task 1

Watch the video from Rhian's school, noting her strengths with regard to mentoring, and then revisit your areas of strength in regard to mentoring by completing Task 2.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 4 Rhian Edwards-Jones

Task 2

In Week 1, you made an assessment of your personal areas of strength and where you may need to develop. Now you have watched the videos above and have worked through the rest of the course, you may have changed your self-assessment. Reflect again on the different elements of a mentor's role and adjust your assessments as necessary. Consider what you might do to continue to develop your learning and skills in each area.

Mentor skills	1 Not very strong	2	3	4
I can act as a positive role model.	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answe
I am able to enthuse a beginner teacher in relation to the content to be taught.	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answe
I can help beginner teachers to understand the school context and how this affects practice.	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answe
I recognise when I need to draw on the expertise of other	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answer...	Provide your answe

colleagues to support the beginner teacher's needs.

I am open to professional learning opportunities, including exploring research.

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

Through my mentoring, I am able to develop my beginner teacher's quality and depth of reflection.

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

I set SMART targets to support my beginner teacher to progress and to meet professional standards.

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

I understand how to assess my beginner teacher's progress effectively and accurately.

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

I use observation of my beginner teacher's practice to provide helpful feedback to enhance their pedagogical learning.

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

I facilitate a range of development

| Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answer... | Provide your answe |

experiences across the school to support my beginner teacher's practice needs.

I am familiar with my beginner teacher's ITE or induction programme design, requirements and assessment methods.

Provide your answer...   *Provide your answer...*   *Provide your answer...*   *Provide your answe*

I plan specific opportunities and methods to provide support and challenge for my beginner teacher.

Provide your answer...   *Provide your answer...*   *Provide your answer...*   *Provide your answe*

Task 3

Think of three points explored in this course that have had – or will have – the greatest impact on your own understanding and practice. Note down these three points in the box below.

Provide your answer...

You will have strengths to bring to the role of mentor, and areas that you need to develop. Sometimes it may feel that you could promote reflection and listen better if you only had the time. So perhaps that is a conversation that needs to be had with the leadership team at your school. However, mentoring is and will always be a rewarding role, and well worth the time and effort you put in to being the best mentor you can.

4 Week 4 summary

This week you have reflected as an individual and as part of a school on your mentoring experiences, and ways in which they can promote professional development and progression. You have been prompted and given opportunities to really assess where you are now, and how you can work at the skills of mentoring so that beginner teachers flourish within your care. It bears repeating that mentoring is a rewarding role that's well worth the time and effort you put in to being the best mentor you can.

Course summary

Mentoring is considered a valued and worthwhile undertaking for all teachers, and one that can offer benefits beyond the immediate gains. Throughout this course, many potential opportunities for transformative practice have been presented, enabling you to gain a clearer vision of where mentoring resides within your setting and how it can contribute to progression for staff and students alike. Mentoring may already be embedded within your school culture, but hopefully this course has deepened your understanding and kindled a desire to further enrich your practice and engage in mentoring opportunities.

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Acknowledgements

Week 4

Videos

Week 1

Week 4

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