



Issue 12

CollectivED Working Papers

Working Papers from
CollectivED; the Centre for
Mentoring, Coaching and
Professional Learning

A University Research and Practice Centre
where collaborative conversations create powerful
professional learning

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Introduction to CollectivED and Issue 12

by CollectivED Director Rachel Lofthouse

CollectivED The Centre for Mentoring, Coaching & Professional Learning is a research and practice centre based in The Carnegie School of Education. We form a community of professionals, academics and students with shared interests. Our aims are to;

- Encourage and enable collaborative conversations which create powerful professional learning
- Build capacity of educators to create contexts which support inclusive career-long and profession-wide learning
- Remove barriers to professional development
- Increase opportunities for educational change through enhanced professional agency and well-being

The research undertaken by the CollectivED community relates to formal and informal professional learning and practice in all sectors of education. Our research focuses on

- teacher education and professional learning at all career stages

- learning through mentoring, coaching, digital pedagogies, workplace and interprofessional practices
- teachers' and leaders' professionalism, identity, wellbeing, self-efficacy and agency
- educational policy and partnership

In Issue 12 we have grouped our papers under several themes:

- ***Coaching to sustain and develop education***
- ***Mentoring, initial teacher education and early career development***
- ***Developing ethical awareness in coaching, mentoring and leadership***
- ***Exploring professional learning***

We are also pleased to publish a book review and two conference reviews. We conclude Issue 12 with notes on our working paper contributors, and information on submitting papers for future publication.



Everyone knows coaching works

A practice insight working paper by Sam Darby

As a school whose most recent Ofsted rating is RI, there is a palpable short-term pressure to deliver substantial improvements in standards. This pressure comes from many directions: Ofsted, school improvement partners, leadership support, local education partnership advisors, and most importantly an internal moral imperative to provide the best for the children and community with which we work.

The obvious follow up is to ask, how should a leadership team go about doing this?

Before answering that question, which I do plan to do, the context of the school must be considered - action without consideration is reckless. The staff had had a poor run of things up until about four years ago, and previous leadership had steered the school in a bad direction resulting in dissatisfaction, divisions and deficits. Progress measures and headline attainment had fallen off a cliff.

A new headteacher took over, installed a new leadership team (including me), repaired and rebuilt relationships and consensus. Where there was no consistency in what was being taught, or the quality of education on offer from class to class, sensible monitoring and

feedback systems were put in place, programmes like Talk 4 Writing and 5-Part Maths were introduced, with substantial training, support and guidance.

Headline attainment more than doubled, progress rose to be in-line with national averages, and the quality of teaching was much better – so what next? I had dreamed of implementing a whole-school coaching programme ever since I became a school leader, and I'd spoken to a colleague in another school who explained his coaching model and the impact it had had in his setting. And here is where the germ of my problems took root: I immediately started putting together a model that I was sure would lead to amazing impact on the quality of teaching across the whole school. As Deputy Head with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment I felt like the proverbial child in a sweet shop; I felt that same wide-eyed optimism and enthusiasm I hadn't felt since I was an NQT. I would be working alongside teachers in their classrooms, team-teaching and giving them gentle, helpful advice and next steps; talking about pedagogy, their dreams for their career development, really listening to them and helping them find their



own way, after all: EVERYONE knows coaching works!

Iteration 1 of my coaching programme tanked. It tanked hard.

It was an organisational behemoth, it lumbered and plodded for nearly a whole term before imploding. And I had started with such good intentions...

During cycles lasting 6 weeks teachers completed a self-audit, identified three targets to work on which were linked to a popular teaching guidebook. They then met with their designated coach every week, alternating weekly between a coaching meeting or in-class support, which would inform the next meeting or in-class session. As for 'Book Looks' and work scrutinies? Pah! a leader would be in every class every week, so we'd know the quality of teaching and what was in books because we'd see them so often. Teachers then reflect on the cycle and repeat, ad infinitum...or, more accurately, ad nauseam...

It is no wonder that it didn't work – it was not only overly complex, it was poorly implemented. I hadn't taken the time to trial it with the middle leaders first, to up skill them to coach too; nor had I worked out the fine detail of when and where all of these meetings would take place. I hadn't used a

small test group to build nuance into the system, and for those people to see benefits and then spread the word to garner better staff buy-in. Ah! hindsight.

So the senior team met with the school's middle leadership (who in our case are our subject leaders) who told me that it was all too much – and thank goodness we had a school culture where senior leaders welcome feedback on new initiatives! Although this was my baby, I knew I had created a monster and that it would be an act of kindness to let it go.

Subject and senior leaders all agreed that the underlying principle was a good one: a move away from 'monitoring' to 'learning review'. We wanted to be working with teachers in their rooms and in the planning processes; really listening to them; letting them make decisions about their career development; creating a culture of openness and trust.

So we retooled it. Iteration 2.

Subject leaders would now work with a single year group at a time for a whole half term. A short drop-in session is followed by an open conversation, and that leads to agreeing short term actions and support from the subject leader. While this is going on, leaders clearly still need to look at standards across the rest of the school! The erstwhile method of doing this, pre-coaching model, involved subject



leaders taking a selection of books and then feeding back with a form they have already filled in. This didn't fit with our new approach to reviewing learning, because the form became a declaration of the teacher's quality: it was either a badge of honour, or a brand of shame – handed down from a subject leader with no real opportunity for discussion or recourse.

We dealt with this by making a huge investment of time and money. Subject leaders would have a whole day every half term to sit down and meet with every single teacher and their books, to talk about them and to pull on the threads of concern or celebration together. Never done to, only done with. As for covering the classes while teachers and leaders meet, we make it work, by hook or by crook, and it is worth it entirely.

The impact on staff has been very positive, leaders have a detailed knowledge of standards in their subject while also building relationships with the rest of the team. Staff sit side-by-side and contribute to the same summary documents. They see each other's work and share good practice; they explore their developmental gaps and fill them with support. They feel trusted to do their jobs and supported to get better at them.

It isn't a perfect system yet, I will not be so immodest to claim I have struck upon some utopian approach to driving standards, building relationships, and improving the quality of education.

Next, I think I want to try people working in three person teams, like lesson study, after all, EVERYONE knows lesson study works...



A snapshot of coaching and supervision during the COVID pandemic

A research summary working paper by Ruth Whiteside and Rachel Lofthouse

A timely study

In November 2020 the annual Teacher Wellbeing Index was published by the UK charity Education Support. In the foreword the following summary is given.

This year's Teacher Wellbeing Index provides an important view of how our teachers have coped in a year defined by crisis. It shows a worrying trend of increased symptoms of poor mental health, such as mood swings, difficulty concentrating, insomnia and tearfulness. It also highlights the sustained pressure on senior leaders as they again report the highest levels of stress among all education staff.

While the wellbeing index does not differentiate headteachers or principals as a subcategory, it does shine a light on the current experiences of senior leaders. The index indicates that 70% of senior leaders work more than 51 hours a week and that 89% experience stress. Given this it is perhaps unsurprising that 72% also said they were resilient.

The survey asks respondents to indicate the help available to them at work in relation to

their wellbeing and mental health. For the first time 'supervision' was listed as a category of support, and the survey indicates that for 8% of all respondents (school leaders and teachers) supervision was available as a safe space to discuss issues. Coaching is not included in the survey.

Emerging trends

It is perhaps not surprising that access to supervision has been included in this wellbeing survey. Supervision for school leaders has been more recently introduced than coaching but draws on the practice from other professions (including social work).

The National Hub for Supervision in Education based at Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University defines the role of supervision in education as 'focused on providing support/training for teachers and educators whose role involves supporting children and young people with issues affecting their well-being/mental health such stress or anxiety'. Shoet and Hawkins (2012) define supervision as 'a joint endeavour in which a practitioner (teacher) with the help of



a supervisor, attends to their clients (children), themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession'. Supervision is usually a sustained commitment, as Lea-Weston explains 'the capacity to be professionally vulnerable is key in supervision and that is why supervision, once a relationship is established, is usually a long-term relationship of some years (2018).

In contrast to supervision, coaching in education, including for school leaders, has been an emerging practice over at least two decades. Coaching in the work context typically focuses more on developing potential and professional learning, but as Grant (2013) reminds us 'while 'coaching' might imply a 'monolithic' activity the term refers to a diversity of practices aimed at generating individual or organisational positive change. Like supervision coaching is based in talk, and van Nieuwerburgh (2017) suggests that it is the nature and focus of the talk that 'defines coaching, with the focus being learning and development enabled by changes in the coachee's behaviour and thinking facilitated through managed conversation'.

There is a growing awareness of the potential for coaching to support wellbeing alongside

learning and development. This is partly achieved through the relational aspects of effective coaching which can 'create a social space in which teachers and others in the education system can feel heard and valued' (Lofthouse, 2019).

These dual dimensions of the potential of coaching were evidenced by Lofthouse and Whiteside (2020) in their evaluative research of a year-long headteacher coaching programme. In this sustained programme coaching was found to improve headteachers' ability for developing staff within their schools, managing difficult issues and improving working relationships, and enhancing their capacity for problem-solving, strategic thinking and the need to cope with continuing demands of the job, including emergency management.

Coaching and supervision of school leaders during the pandemic

Between March and July 2020 CollectivED undertook a small-scale study into how coaching and supervision was being utilised by education leaders during the pandemic crisis. This was a small dip into the waters of coaching and supervision which is perhaps a little muddied, because we often find the terms *coaching*, *mentoring*, and *supervision* interchangeably. We were keen to find out what the emerging themes were for leaders in



the early days of the pandemic, and also to investigate the perceived differences – or similarities – between the two concepts of coaching and supervision. Online responses were collected via questionnaire; involving school leaders as well as coaches and those providing supervision. For the coaching aspects we also interviewed some respondents at greater length to explore their thoughts further.

If we take the definitions of coaching as above, there is always a learning element to the process. The learning is usually ‘discovered’ within the coaching itself and then actions resolved by the coachee to apply that learning to their context.

Interestingly, when we look at the emerging themes from coaching during the pandemic, we can see that the overarching sense of anxiety felt by leaders both for themselves, their staff and their pupils, is more of a fit for the definition of supervision in education. When responses from both those who were coached, and those who received supervision were compared, we can see that there is a significant overlap between the two.

For instance, when asked about the pressing concerns at this time, the **coached** senior leaders talked about:

- safeguarding – how could they ensure adequate safeguarding when in lockdown?

- feeling isolated – from their team and their school community
- difficulties with staff – how the staff members were coping, and perceived differences in workload

School leader responses from **supervision** sessions explored:

- support in relation to roles and responsibilities of staff
- dealing with a changed leadership focus on self and staff
- maintaining the focus on working for the children, particularly those who are at risk

Coaches who were interviewed talked at length about the school leaders’ needs, suggesting that ‘what was already there is now massively amplified’ particularly when it came to safeguarding children. Another coach referred to leaders as dealing with huge levels of anxiety about how they were to lead remotely, whilst maintaining the focus on school improvement.

A common theme emerging from the coach interviews was the opportunity afforded by the pandemic to do things differently. However, whilst some heads were able to think more creatively, others were ‘stuck’. What seemed to be the difference between the two was the level of collaboration and support afforded the head by their senior leadership team, the governing body and the



staff. One coach suggested that this was underpinned by clarity of vision, 'What is your guiding star?' This same coach referred to the similarities he had found between coaching school leaders, and when it veered into supervision, those being:

- space to talk freely
- lack of judgement
- psychological safety

Another coach talked about the key themes she had found as she coached school leaders:

- understanding their own responses to the situation
- needing support for their own well-being
- managing the fine line between stability and fluidity

The focus of **supervision** shows that school leaders were experiencing great instability and were encouraged to find a balance between 'well-being and feelings of despair and terror'. Others needed an opportunity to talk to an impartial 'other' and 'a space to think and problem-solve'. Managing staff with

empathy to allay their anxieties about the situation they found themselves in was noted several times.

What seem possible from this brief 'dip' is that both coaching and supervision at this time fulfilled a similar role for the school leaders: supporting, giving space and empathy, and strategizing. Is this because of the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, or because there is, indeed, some overlap between the two disciplines of coaching and supervision?

Given the situation, it probably really doesn't matter if the two disciplines overlap, as the important thing has been to ensure senior leaders felt supported, whatever that looked like. It would be a useful comparison to explore coaching and supervision post-pandemic, to see if there is any overlap then. Certainly, the pandemic has leant itself to working through leaders' emotional responses, rather than a perhaps simpler focus in coaching on solutions, actions and school improvement.

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Coaching for Wellbeing; an international school case study

A practice insight working paper by Andrew Macdonald-Brown

Synopsis

There is a wellbeing agenda that schools and mental health practitioners are all too aware of. Research from OECD and others affirms this, and those in schools on the ground do not need this evidence to tell you that young people face challenges that affect their wellbeing and mental health.

The barometer that measures wellbeing is more finely tuned of late; it is more sensitive in the Covid-19 world, as people experience relatively long periods of isolation, disruption to habits, uncertainty, and an online existence that can't quite compensate for in-person communal interaction.

At this time there is a need for those in school communities to 'make sense of all this' uncertainty and change. Arguably, the refined and highly skilled process of engaging in a coaching conversation can help students, staff and families to reflect, process, review and distil issues of concern. When focusing on student wellbeing, coaching approaches can provide tools for reframing and changing perspective, and give a greater sense of choice and control (agency) as they navigate through the environment of cognitive dissonance in which they exist.

20 months ago, as a High School in South China, we embarked on a journey in which we set out to enhance our wellbeing provision through developing a programme of coaching. Our 'Coaching for Wellbeing' (CWB) programme was reviewed in May 2019, and we shared a practice paper about our progress to date. This is the next chapter...

Context and Background

Previous practice paper

In July 2019 we prepared a 'practice paper' that outlined a programme at our High School in South China. This focused on bringing a coaching culture to the school with the focus on enhancing pastoral support and wellbeing provision.

The paper outlined the structure of the coaching programme; from how we built capacity and competence (skills) through a structured and relatively bespoke training programme with a small group of staff. We also explored initial evidence of impact, and evaluation of programme delivery.

Critically, the paper set out a broader context in which we recognised that there is a significant problem that school leaders are dealing with – a notable decline in the



wellbeing of young people. This has not gone away, and it shapes the context of this practice paper also.

Additionally, the magnitude and frequency of change over the 6 month from January 2020 to June 2020 cannot have escaped anyone's notice. The paradigm shift that education has seen in the Covid-19 era also creates a contextual setting that very much has shaped the nature of our programme.

Our school

Dulwich International High School Zhuhai is part of the larger Dulwich College International group of schools. We sometimes refer to the group as a "One Family of Schools". As a High School, our students typically join us at the age of 14 years old, having completed 9 years of compulsory Chinese education. Families 'opt out' of the Chinese education system, preferring a more western and holistic education philosophy, and having clear aspirations for their child to attend a top ranked university in the west. We have c350 students, studying UK based internationally recognised qualifications – the IGCSE, and also the AS and A level qualifications. 85% of our students come from mainland China, with a further 10% from Hong Kong (SAR), Macau (SAR), with the remaining students from other SE Asian countries and a small representation from 6 other countries. We are very much an international school, with international staff,

in China with mostly Chinese students, and an entirely EAL (English as an additional language) environment.

Macro Level Indicators - "Houston, we have a problem"

There has been for some time a growing interest in wellbeing as a measure of a country's development. The inclusion of the OECD [Better Life Index](#) evidentially demonstrates a movement towards a broader view of 'development' beyond the economic measure. Yet more recent research (Dr Jamie Chiu, keynote at the IB Global Conference in March 2019) has demonstrated alarming patterns of relative wellbeing in SE Asia when compared to other countries, notably amongst young people.

A preoccupation with university destinations and rankings, and examination performance outcomes in the context of high aspiration and expectation necessarily applies a level of pressure seldom universally experienced in other parts of the world. Do young people possess the skills to self-regulate and manage pressure before it becomes 'stress'? To what extent can they exercise agency? Do they have access to the right kind of support in this context?

It is in this context of high aspiration and expectation, high stakes assessment, cultural and community mores, and deteriorating



levels of wellbeing that we introduced our programme - 'Coaching for Wellbeing'.

Why coaching

Having also been the recipient of coaching through a [CTI](#) trained advanced level coach I was increasingly convinced of its effectiveness in exploring issues, distilling and clarifying these, and developing your own actions to address these. When one considers the notion of 'student agency' in this context - as 'voice, choice and ownership' I could see the obvious connection.

Additionally, research seemed to indicate that self-determination was a key characteristic in supporting students' progress. The [Education Endowment Fund Toolkit](#) showed that 'meta cognition and self-regulation' are highly influential in supporting students' progress. Whilst the focus here is on self-reflection in learning there are clear associations with a coaching model.

What we did – (*'That is all very well in practice, but how will it work out in theory?'*)

With research pointing to concerns about deteriorating wellbeing amongst young people, the challenge for school leaders is to address the question of 'what is that right action?' What might be the consequences of getting it wrong, as well as the positive impact

of getting it right? And given the relative choices identified, what are the opportunity costs?

In the Spring of 2018 we set about laying the foundations for emerging priorities. We felt that we needed to build capacity both in our pastoral structures, and in our staffing to enhance our approach to delivering 'wellbeing for all'. We established some clear objectives around provision and, more critically, building a 'wellbeing culture'. We knew this would take time. We knew that there was compelling evidence of the positive impact of such a development (articulated in [Dr Helen Street's](#) focus on 'Contextual Wellbeing').

Coaching for wellbeing (CWB) - Part 1

We were able to build a programme with UK based [Making Stuff Better](#) (MSB), that allowed us to achieve the blended delivery model we were after. We launched our CWB programme in November 2018 with a group of 12 staff, mostly drawn from pastoral and student services roles. Two days of intensive coaching skills training were delivered by MSB to really build buy-in, gain traction, and immerse participants early on in the practice of coaching. This was followed up by monthly virtual sessions that would be used to reinforce existing skills practice; address participant-specific case work queries; extend



coaching skills; and maintain frequent 'touch points'.

The programme was very well received by participants who pointed to the high quality of training they were receiving. This later proved significant in the programme extension we planned for Cohort 2 (August 2019-June 2020). We began to observe early signs of buy-in from a collective teacher efficacy perspective (participants reported that they felt this had real potential in building capacity in their roles and in the pastoral services within our school). However, there was less understanding of the programme amongst other staff, and there had been only pockets of success with students. The Cohort 1 programme had unearthed other contextual complexities such as:

- i) linguistically and culturally, the coaching approach had limitations - students' ability to express themselves confidently and with clarity in their second language inhibited our successes somewhat. Additionally, this was a process that openly explored feelings and emotions, and this was something that our students were less practiced in, and was culturally less accepted
- ii) relative ignorance about what CWB was meant we were not

getting the volume of referrals we had expected, although those in pastoral and student facing roles reported that their effectiveness in role had been enhanced by the programme. Participants also reported that they had found the programme deeply developmental, but felt there was evidence that many of their colleagues were in relative ignorance about what coaching was and the programme itself

- iii) At the same time, coaching conversations between staff were noticeably enhanced, and specifically amongst the participants on the programme, who reported high levels of mutual trust and a recognition of the benefits of coaching in distilling complex issues, bringing clarity, a sense of differing perspective, and agency

Coaching for wellbeing (CWB) - Part 2

Having reviewed progress through our CWB Cohort 1 programme, we set about implementing the review recommendations.

We launched a whole school focus on coaching in August 2019. All Staff engaged in training in basic coaching skills through our



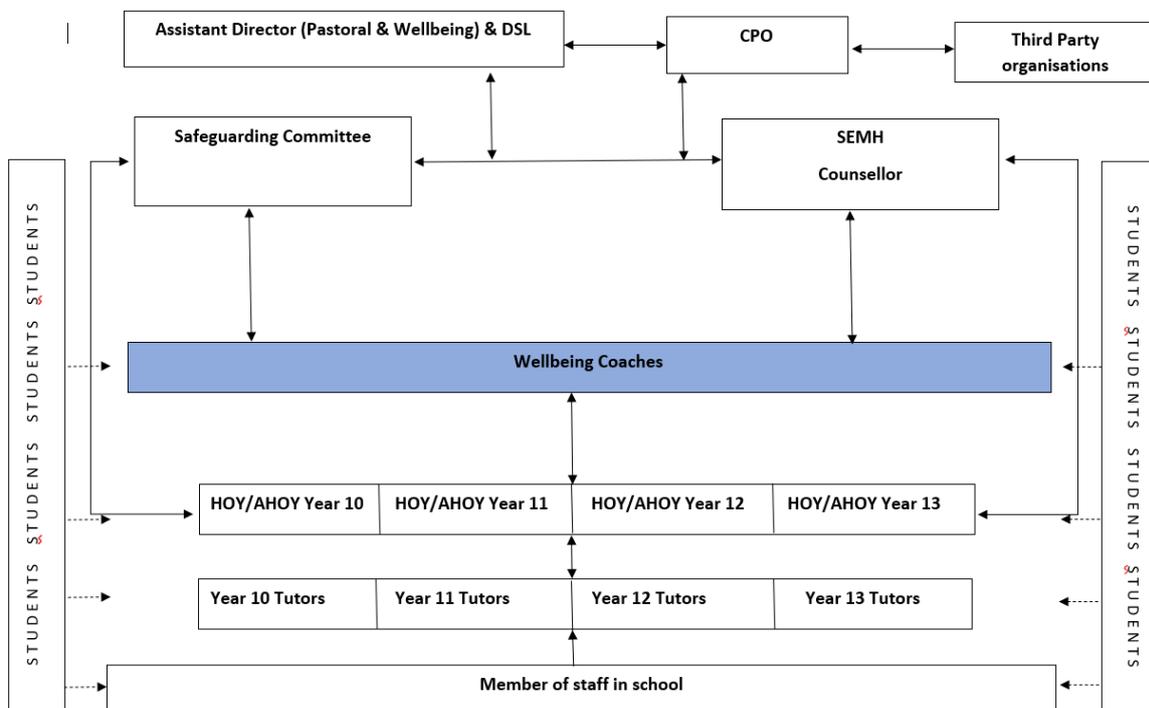
induction days. This established a clearer understanding of what coaching was and our aspirations for supporting our pastoral structures and our wellbeing development agenda more widely.

There appeared to be instant buy-in with many more staff than intended requesting to join the 'opt-in' Cohort 2. At a leadership level we knew this was important. We felt that once 'most were on board' we could realise the aspiration of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts - ie benefit from collective teacher efficacy (the collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students) which, according to [Professor](#)

[John Hattie](#), has a significant positive 'effect size' in terms of student progress.

Additionally, we linked participants in Cohort 2 with those from Cohort 1. This was an opportunity to begin to build a more sustainable development model, to reinforce the learning of participants in Cohort 1, and to ensure what we had learned in Cohort 1 programme could influence the organic as well as planned developments of the Cohort 2 programme.

To deepen the coaching capacity within the school, Cohort 1 participants were invited to join a 'Year 2 programme – Advanced level skills', and many were keen to continue their development journey.



Building collaboration, reflective practice and joint practice development.

Having already adopted an action research approach to much of our in-house professional learning through Professional Learning Communities ([PLCs](#)) it seemed that extending this to our CWB Cohort 2 programme was advantageous. The time and space allocated to this, plus the monthly virtual sessions arranged with MSB meant that Cohort 2 were receiving both professional coaching training, whilst establishing an internal network of joint practice development. We understood the likely positive impact of this. Devine, Meyers, and Houssemand (3rd World Conference on Learning, Teaching and Educational Leadership (WCLTA-2012)) noted the significance of building a coaching culture through systems of collective and collaborative learning.

In addition to the face-to-face training, planned monthly virtual conference sessions, and now PLCs, MSB suggested a training model that was to prove central in developing practice – coaching triads. These groups extended the learning beyond the VC sessions with ‘homework’ being set that focused on skills development and practice. A structured curriculum of sorts enabled participants to have a clearer sense of progress and a skills development audit used at the beginning of a

PLC session in September supported Cohort 2 participants to focus in on skills development and joint practice development objectives.

Student awareness and agency

Whilst we were building capacity successfully amongst our staff, there remained the question about student awareness and buy-in.

Having appointed a new Assistant Director (Pastoral and Wellbeing), we were able to take a more strategic view of how this programme fitted in with other developments. Whilst assemblies and other information sharing approaches helped raise awareness of the CWB programme; tutor time was to become more structure and focused. We extended the time allocated to tutor time and this gave greater opportunity for activities to be driven by Form Tutors. Various innovative developments emerged through a devolved ownership approach. Year teams designed activities that they felt fitted the objectives associated with our wellbeing and coaching agenda.... ‘Wellbeing Wednesdays’, ‘Mindfulness Mondays’, ‘peer coaching’, etc began to emerge. We now had the extended capacity of Cohort 1 and 2 participants able to implement their learning about coaching through their roles as Form Tutors, and this proved to be a catalyst for greater student self-referral. The students were being increasingly exposed to coaching approaches,



and Tutors reported enhancements in their role from a relational perspective.

Impact

Quality matters – many participants reference the quality of the training from MSB; both the focus and format, and notably the delivery. This is important as it signalled that participants regarded the significant time commitment of the programme as worthwhile.

Trust me, I'm a professional – Participants in both cohorts point to high levels of trust being developed within the training and triad structures. When a coaching conversation unpacks an issue of a wellbeing nature, a high level of trust is essential. What came from this was a sense of camaraderie and shared experience; professional community was strengthened and an emerging coaching culture became more visible. The powerful effects of collective teacher efficacy have become evident as we attempt to build culture.

Do you need a conversation – Evidentially, there appeared to be more 'coaching moments' between colleagues whereby discussion were characterised more frequently by active listening, powerful questions, and a reduction in opinion giving and advice offering. This was observed and a number of participants pointed to both being

more cognisant of such behaviours in themselves and others.

Covid conversations – an unexpected augmentation of this programme was the arrival of Covid-19. Our school was one of the first wave to be impacted by the pandemic as schools in China closed in January 2020. We were not to re-open until May. This period was characterised by a prolonged period of uncertainty, with many staff away from both 'home' in China, and 'home' (by citizenship). Some were 'stranded' as border and travel restrictions intensified. Returning meant enforced and mandatory quarantine, and other lock down measures signalled prolonged periods of relative isolation. Online learning delivery became the new norm and virtual contact prevailed.

In all of this was an enhanced consciousness around the wellbeing of our students and staff as the frequency and magnitude of change and uncertainty intensified. Now was the time for 'coaching for wellbeing' and our wellbeing coaches moved to a virtual environment in support of this work. It is difficult to measure the impact here. However, there is no question that there was an escalation of need and we were well placed in terms of our capacity to support those that reached out (and even those that did not).

This time its personal - Of note over the past 18 months, and certainly during the Covid-19 pandemic, is that many Cohort 1 and 2



participants reference their ability to self-manage these challenging times using the tools that had been brought to them through the CWB programme. Some cite the techniques used to explore perspective (*'you can't always change your situation, but you can change your relationship with it'*); whereas others note accessing inner resources introduced through the face-to-face and VC session.

If you don't use it, you lose it - some participants in Cohort 1 had noted in our first year that they had been less able to really implement their coaching skills supporting student wellbeing. The structured programme in our second year (for both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 participants) with coaching triads, a PLC schedule to support joint practice development and review, and the other initiatives around awareness raising and complementary programme (*'Wellbeing Wednesdays'* etc) meant that there were clearly more opportunities to both practice skills and use skills in support of student and staff wellbeing.

Anything you can do I can do better - Cohort 1 participants that have pastoral and student services roles reported that the year 1 programme had enhanced their ability to meet the demands of their roles in supporting student wellbeing. Cohort 2 feedback is consistent with this. What was more noticeable was that coaching skills had

become more central to the toolkit used by more colleagues.

The grapevine and student agency – it was envisaged that the opportunities for coaches to use their skills in a wellbeing context would be driven both by formal strategy and more informal and organic development. We noted that students exhibited behaviours of more frequent self-referral (typically citing that they knew a friend that had benefitted from being coached); or sometimes approached a member of the pastoral team or a wellbeing coach directly about a friend that they felt might benefit from being coached. In both cases there appeared to be a shift towards students taking the lead when engaging in the programme, in addition to teacher-led referrals.

The agency demonstrated by students is also evident in the process of coaching itself as students begin to gain clarity and perspective about an issue being explored as well as determining ways forward that came from themselves.

It was this recognition that, in part, led us to co-design a programme with MSB which we termed ['The Inner Leader Programme'](#) in which students were exposed to basic coaching and self-regulation tools in a structured 8 week programme.

Pedagogical – a number of participants in both cohorts make reference to their



approach to teaching being enhanced. Colleagues cite use of more powerful questioning and corresponding stronger active listening as particularly noticeable approaches. In addition, some point to 'bottom lining' as an effective approach in the classroom. Others reference being more cognisant of the relational dimension of the classroom, being more attuned to mood and more emotionally empathetic (sometimes referred to as 'level 3 listening' in the CWB training programme).

Cross-cultural competence – the very deliberate development from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2 of inviting more 'local' bi-lingual colleagues onto the programme was driven by the belief that EAL students may prefer to access a coaching conversation with those that use their mother tongue. Whilst the evidence of our second year bears this out in some cases, an additional benefit has been noticeable – participants in Cohort 2 have gained insights and cultural perspectives through their triads and larger group VC sessions that have shaped their engagement with students through the CWB programme.

A stitch in time – a pleasing indicator of the impact of this work came from our Child Protection Officer and SEMH Counsellor. Both noted a reduction in the level of referrals being made for students with more severe wellbeing and mental health concerns. Whilst not conclusive, both colleagues were able to

point to the impact of wellbeing coaching on students' ability to address their own wellbeing concerns, to develop clarity, ability to change perspective and derive a greater sense of control over their options going forward. Additionally, greater resilience was reported. This enhanced sense of agency was evidence. What is less certain is the correlation between these and the process of coaching itself. Certainly, many members of our pastoral system point to the CWB programme as a catalyst for this improvement.

What next?

Sustainability and succession – one of the characteristics of international schools is the turnover of staff. In order to ensure this development leads to an embedding of coaching and wellbeing culture an approach is needed which supports the school to become more autonomous in this development.

Culture and provision extension – if coaching is to genuinely be 'the way we do things around here', then provision can be extended and enhanced. This is not about 'putting things in place', rather it is ensuring that both 'doing' and 'being' are central to developments. The CWB programme has developed capacity within the pastoral system to support wellbeing for students and staff. The



augmentation of this through various provision in tutor time is supportive.

The implementation of the Inner Leader Programme directly for students supports

further and increasingly brings to the school community a 'common language' and intention that becomes pervasive and immersive.



The power and potential of coaching

A practice insight working paper by Helen Rowland, Donna Tandy and John Taylor

Focus-Trust has fifteen primary academies in West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire West. This reflective insight paper aims to outline the impact of the Trust's decision to develop and embed a coaching culture across the organisation.

Our Trust vision is 'Great academies at the heart of our communities' and our shared Commitment is 'Learning together, making the difference'. The Trust and our academies share five strategic priorities one of which is: 'Building a learning culture with moral purpose'. Developing and embedding a coaching strategy and culture for the whole team of academies (all of whom were at various stages of their improvement journey) was at the heart of this. We have encouraged leaders to embrace what Clutterbuck D 2013 stated: *'the fulcrum for achieving a coaching culture is, in reality, at the level of the team. Indeed, it may well be that we have seriously underestimated the role of the teamwork in influencing organisational culture overall - and, hence, the wellbeing and performance of the organisation as a whole.'*

Careful consideration initially needed to be given to our organisational context and

characteristics. Our Trust values are 'Care, Dare, Fair and Share' and if we were going to live out these values our staff had to be encouraged and supported to take risks and coaching had to underpin the appraisal and academy improvement process. People needed to understand where coaching fitted into our organisational culture and why it would be of benefit to them personally and professionally and ultimately benefit the children, families and communities.

A key starting point was for members of our Central Team and Principals/Head Teachers to attend Level 1 leadership skills coaching training with Dr Paul Simmons . This highlighted the impact being a coachee and a coach had on them personally and professionally and how this may vary from their usual leadership approach of taking control and solving issues for staff. This training uses the Three Circle Model of coaching and leaders have since used this approach in various ways:

- In Senior Leadership Meetings to discuss particular issues such as challenge for all abilities of children
- In whole staff coaching sessions to deal with particular issues the academy was



facing, e.g. how to improve children's ability to edit their work

- In one to one coaching sessions where individual leaders discussed issues they were facing, e.g. providing feedback to older and more experienced staff
- In one to one coaching sessions where leaders worked with members of their teaching teams to solve particular issues, e.g. how to include metacognitive strategies for children to engage in active discussion.

Subsequently, leaders have had Level 2 and Level 3 leadership skills coaching training and arranged for their leadership teams and staff to undergo the same training.

Impact is clear where whole staff, team and individual coaching sessions have enabled all staff to have a voice, share their concerns about the current reality, discuss what they would like it to look like in the future and discuss and agree actions to achieve this goal, assigning responsibilities for particular actions and timescales. Academy teams have been able to openly discuss quite sensitive and controversial issues and agree whole school actions. These have then been monitored and evaluated carefully.

Over time and with various colleagues, we have had to explain how the disciplines of coaching and mentoring differ and can both be very successful in supporting people to

deal with particular issues and needs.

However, there is clear differentiation between the two disciplines, '*they sit at opposite ends of the spectrum*' (Prout 2018) and individuals seeking support need to be clear which will work best for them at a particular time and for a specific reason. Learning through the coaching process is an inside out process, not an outside-in one which mentoring is. Coaches and Mentors need to be clear on their different roles too and, if it is appropriate, explain that they are taking off their 'coach hat' for a moment and putting on their 'mentor hat'.

Through coaching, the impact on individual performance has also contributed very positively to improving the overall organisational performance of the Trust as it links directly to the coaching approach taken in our appraisal process. Coaching is built into the professional development programme and opportunities for coaching sessions are built into the school day or staff meeting time. Staff morale is high, absence rates are low and there is limited staff turnover as all staff feel highly valued and professionally developed. Through coaching, staff are empowered to own the change they want to make and without any limiting 'pupil data targets' the quality of teaching is good or better and pupil achievement is accelerating.



Promoting the positive benefits of the power and potential of coaching has been a key part of my Chief Executive role: assuring governors and trustees that our Central team, Head Teachers and Principals should spend time and budgets on themselves and staff being trained, having their own coach and coaching staff. Leading by example has been key and having participated in the Paul Simmons training I was keen to be the most effective coach I could be to support others. In 2018-20 I undertook the Xenonex ILM Level 7 Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring. This uses the GROW model (Whitmore 2002) and has supported me to ensure that the appraisal process across our Trust, and the majority of conversations I have with colleagues, use a coaching style in order that all colleagues are empowered, highly motivated and ‘own the change’ they want to make. I have my own executive coach and regularly talk about the impact this has on me and my work. This has helped me persuade one or two reluctant people to have their own coach; it’s not a sign of weakness, it’s a strength.

Here are two examples of the impact coaching has had in Focus-Trust: one on the organisation (two academies) and individuals and one on an individual who has then impacted on other individuals and organisations.

Coppice and Roundthorn Academies – Executive Principal - John Taylor

Our coaching journey began in 2013, working alongside Dr Paul Simmons (Independent Coaching). The driving factors were a belief in the power of coaching for great leadership combined with a desire to work differently with teachers in how we develop classroom practice.

Dr Simmons introduces the Three Circle Model: Reality – Ideal – Action with an emphasis on self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Staff like the model, which looks at different coaching styles from directive to non-directive:

“It’s not just about bouncing questions back at people,” as one teacher put it.

In part two, The Service Triangle and Iceberg Model (McClelland Hay, 2003) are explored in the context of school leadership. All staff who have a senior leadership role complete this part of the programme and as a senior leadership team, we return to the themes and aspects regularly, especially Covey’s time management quadrant and often ask how we can spend more time in Q2 to work on that which is important but not urgent.

As leaders, the model has enabled us to support each other through challenges we face individually in our roles, or as a collective team. For teachers, in conjunction with IRIS



camera technology, they develop each other through coaching conversations. We also use a coaching structure in progress meetings and in devising our action plans, following the three circle model.

In reflecting how we could have improved the impact, some staff weren't L1 trained with Paul, when they started using IRIS – this might have helped produce better discussions with some triad groups way back in 2013-15. We did, however, ensure that each triad had at least one person L1 trained so they could lead and ensure coaching was the dominant style.

Coaching is helping us to ask first, to listen better and to reach solutions to our own issues and challenges.

Donna Tandy (Deputy CEO / Academy Improvement Partner)

Prior to joining Focus-Trust in September 2016, coaching was something I *assumed* I did as part of my everyday practice as a headteacher. In reality, this couldn't be further from the truth. This doesn't mean I was ineffective in my role or the development of my staff, but it became clear that there was another way and one that would empower others more and put less responsibility for their development on me, more on them leading to a real balance.

I got the support I needed by attending Level 1 Dr Paul Simmonds from Independent Coaching. I realised early on that I was not a natural coachee; sharing and discussing issues concerns or perceived weaknesses was new to me. Previously I had been the person who others came to for those conversations, now I was on the other side and initially it felt very uncomfortable.

I moved onto Level 2 looking wider as coaching within an organisation. This has been pivotal in my shift in thinking and approach. The seemingly simple 3 circle model of Reality, Ideal and Action structure has provided me with a framework for nearly all aspects of my work with others and to support my own thinking. Drawing the reality and using this as starting point initially felt very strange, but I have seen time and time again how useful it is.

'101 Coaching Strategies and Techniques' (G. McMahon/A. Archer Eds) has become my 'bible' when working with different groups of staff and finding new ways of working. Where I have seen most impact is with individuals who, despite being competent, were lacking in direction or confidence and with one particular senior leadership team who had become fragmented over time. Using the 3 Circle model to structure the conversations from drawing the reality has been instrumental in making the development



happen, even if some of the conversations within the structure were difficult to have.

What would I do differently if I started again?

Do it sooner!

In conclusion, throughout Focus-Trust and our academies, coaching is recognised and valued as a developmental process not a judgmental one. Time must be taken to recognise that whilst there will be some ‘quick wins’, coaching takes time to have a significantly positive impact on an organisation’s long-term development, but it will be well worth waiting for. As outlined in the Coaching Ripple

Effect people being coached ‘report increased levels of wellbeing, transformational leadership and goal attainment.’

The introduction of a coaching strategy and culture across Focus-Trust, with well thought out strategy linked to individual and academy improvement priorities, has been highly successful in improving self-awareness, self-belief, wellbeing, empowerment, individual accountability for improvement and team commitment to ongoing improvement – particularly important in the challenging times we are now in - living and working alongside COVID-19. All organisations should embrace it.

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Rising to the COVID19 Challenge: stabilising and rethinking practices in initial teacher education

A think piece working paper by Mary-Clare Relihan

Introduction

In March 2020, global education came to a standstill as schools and universities grappled with the unanticipated implications of COVID19. Educators and students in the Southern Hemisphere, particularly in Melbourne, have spent the majority of the last seven months moving in and out of remote learning. This has had huge implications on initial teacher education (ITE) and the onsite placements our student teachers would usually complete. As the Northern Hemisphere schools and universities return after the summer break, I was inspired to share my experiences as a coach to student teachers and mentors in the ITE sector in Melbourne.

A recent publication by Ellis et al. (2020) investigated the COVID19 impact on ITE providers around the globe and their responses to the unavoidable distribution. Interviewing teacher educators across four continents, they identified two common key responses; the attempt to **stabilize the situation** and the opportunity to **rethink practices** (Ellis et al, 2020). I would like to use these two themes as a lens to guide my

personal reflections as an ITE coach in this space.

Stabilising the Situation

The initial phase of stabilisation in ITE began with the discussion around the reduction of placement days required by the regulatory teaching bodies here in Victoria. Naively we believed we would return to onsite placements in Melbourne by June. However, lockdown resumed once again on July 18th and sourcing remote online placements became our Everest! We now had to reimagine placements for our students and support our partner schools and mentors with this new concept.

The work of Munro (2020) highlights how being attuned to the nuances of conversations and relationships enables us as coaches to pivot between different stances to support the coachee. Reflecting on this phase of stabilisation, I realised my coaching practices were initially non-directive, as I became a sounding board for both mentors and student teachers. As managerial decisions within the ITE sector provided clarity on the revised placement blocks, my role pivoted away from



empathetic listening and moved towards capacity building. These conversations allowed mentors the opportunity to talk through their own mentoring practice and the transition to online placements. My coaching conversations with student teachers also began to focus more on critical reflection and skill development in preparation for these remote placements.

During this period of stabilization, I could not always provide definitive answers to mentors and student teachers. Instead, I was presented with a real-life opportunity to support and coach people to sit in an uncomfortable space of not knowing and to problem-solve possible solutions. This experience highlighted to me the importance of cultivating these conversations of growth and innovation. As a 'recovering' primary school teacher, I have always loved a clear detailed plan. Now as a coach, I had to use my skill set to move away from relying on our historical fixed approach and support others into this emerging sphere of online mentoring. Embarking into this new territory enabled us to challenge current boundaries, generating opportunities for creative thought and ingenuity (Wenger 2000).

Rethinking Practices

The most exciting facet of remote placements was the opportunities it provided for us to collaborate with our mentors and students to

rethink and co-create new practices. The historical placement rulebook had become obsolete overnight! In its place, a dynamic and responsive process emerged, as we moved in and out of various stages of lockdown, remote learning and ever-changing governmental guidelines. It was inspirational to see so many mentors and schools willing to engage with remote placement and adopt new processes to support our student teachers learning and development.

Innovative thinking came to the forefront as some mentors created communication plans with their student teachers, outlining how, where and when they would communicate with each other online. This ensured the student teacher felt reassured about the support provided and their accessibility to their mentor. It also created boundaries and expectations around online communication so neither party became overburdened. For other student teachers, they appreciated the honesty of their mentors, as mentors openly shared that they too were embarking on a steep learning curve. The logistical set up of remote placements resulted in some student teachers feeling they had greater autonomy as they didn't have to 'follow their mentor around' and could work independently on tasks with their mentor's support only a click away. Remote placements also seemed to provide greater opportunities for scheduled uninterrupted feedback sessions. This enabled



student teachers to engage in meaningful reflective dialogue with their mentor.

From my observations as a coach, it was clear that remote placements did present some challenges as both mentors and PST's adapted to this new way of learning and teaching. In particular, student teachers commented on the difficulty of building relationships in an online setting with their students. However, many student teachers saw online learning as a platform to debut their digital literacy skills and creativity as a developing teacher. Perhaps the greatest challenge in navigating the remote placement space was the wide spectrum of remote learning and teaching that was happening at each school. The disparity in engagement highlighted the varying access students had to technology and/or parental support. This was a stark reminder to our student teachers of how COVID19 has exacerbated the inequalities in education and our wider society.

Is the end in sight or is it the beginning?

All around Melbourne, educators are beginning to breathe a sigh of relief as schools finally reopen in October to onsite learning and onsite placements also recommence. Unfortunately, we cannot predict if we will need to return to remote placements in 2021. Therefore, we need to take time to reflect on the innovation demonstrated this year and look to harness and develop this further in the ITE sector. This experience has raised many questions about the application of our current mentoring models. It has been energising to witness students and mentors shape and design these models to meet their own needs and the demands of their online context. It has also forced me to reflect on my role as a coach in education and in particular to consider how I move between different coaching styles. There is no denying education will never be the same again, and the same should be said of initial teacher education. In conclusion, I take inspiration from Chambers and Adams (2020); it's not about 'going back' to school, but going forward!

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The Art (or Craft?) of Observation of Novice Teachers

A practice insight working paper by Henry Sauntson

In their 2002 paper *School-based mentoring in initial teacher training (ITT): What the student teachers think*, Hobson & Malderez determine that ‘student teachers perceive mentors and mentoring to be of key importance to their training’, and that as a trainee, ‘having school-teachers/mentors observe your lessons and give feedback afterwards’ is of significant importance. With such an emphasis and weight on this particular aspect of ITE (and the iterative nature of the process) we must ensure that we get it right.

Teaching takes time to get right – Berliner (2002) states that ‘a reasonable answer to the question of how long it takes to acquire high levels of skill as a teacher might be 5-7 years, if one works hard at it. Competence as a teacher might come about two years earlier, but achieving that level of ability also requires some work’; there is a long game to play and the acknowledgement of this must be made explicit early on in the journey – we must use observation as part of a cyclical process of development that acknowledges the individual aspects of the larger picture that is teaching as a practice – a classroom craft to be honed. We have to consider the reflective and evaluative capacity of the novice teacher to receive, understand and act on feedback

given – Kennedy (2015) tells us that ‘learning to think about teaching practices in terms of their purposes in the overall process of teaching is especially important for novices because novices themselves hold naïve theories of action about what teachers do and why’. As she argues for the parsing of teaching practice she elaborates – ‘[novice] theories of action can be based on childhood perceptions of their own teachers, and our role as teacher educators is to help them develop a more sophisticated understanding of what teachers do.’ This last part is key. We must, I feel, consider the emotional and professional cognitive load that comes with receiving regular critique and mitigate for it; a focused, targeted approach to observing lessons as opposed to a constant holistic bombardment.

One of the key roles of the mentor in the development of the novice teacher is that of observation of their practice; for many trainees on an ITT route this will happen every lesson – the mentor or classroom teacher is observing, taking notes, offering advice and feedback after the students leave. However, the mentors themselves need to be able to conduct this process without it becoming one that instills fear and leads to a perpetuation of



the 'show lesson' ideology which is thankfully fading away as Ofsted-style judgments are removed from internal monitoring and quality assurance.

As Initial Teacher Educators we must always consider those who support the trainees day in, day out - Hobson et al (2009) tell us that 'mentor preparation programmes are extremely variable in nature and quality, often focusing more on administrative aspects of the role than on developing mentors' ability to support and facilitate mentees' professional learning; often they are not compulsory, and are poorly attended' and that 'the preparation of mentors should be treated as a priority area'; we aim to do this, and one of the places to start is with training and support in how to successfully observe the trainee.

Jones and Straker tell us that the majority of mentors 'draw on their teacher knowledge without sufficiently taking into account the specific aspects of adult learners and the generic principles underpinning mentoring'; by allowing this to perpetuate we are in danger of moving towards the situation that Hobson and Malderez (2013) refer to as 'judgementoring'; the easiest and most dangerous place to offer judgment is in the post-observation feedback. Hobson admits that 'where appropriately employed, school-based mentoring is a highly effective –

perhaps the single most effective – means of supporting the professional learning and development of beginning teachers' but draws our attention to the caveat that 'mentoring does not always bring about [...] positive outcomes, and can actually stunt beginner teachers' professional learning and growth.'; Jones and Straker point out further that we must 'enable mentors to free themselves from the idiosyncratic practices they may have developed over the years by providing access to adequate training and developmental programmes' – we have a duty as ITE to provide this, and there is no important aspect than supporting mentors to observe trainees appropriately. Hudson (2016) finds that mentor feedback is variable in quality and that 'there can be a myriad of foci when mentors observe their mentees in practice'; too disparate, too transient, too unfocussed perhaps? He considers that 'part of the problem may be that mentors have too much to consider during lesson observations, thus having a more specific focus on a teaching practice may offer greater consistency between mentors' observations'; note the word consistency – as a provider and practice we must ensure equitable outcomes for all trainees and have no bias in their assessment or development – this starts with consistent mentor support and trustable, relevant feedback on practice. We must, as Hudson continues to explore, provide appropriate mentor training on observation



and feedback, including guiding the approach taken – we must select and train mentors appropriately to ensure they have the ‘knowledge and skills for observing teaching practices with the aim of providing focused feedback’.

Kennedy (2015) tells us that ‘when we observe a lesson, we are observing one particular way of portraying the curriculum, containing student behavior, enlisting student participation, and exposing student thinking’; she goes on – ‘no lesson represents the only way these various challenges can be addressed, nor even the best possible way that they could be addressed; rather, each lesson represents one of many possible solutions’. It is clear here that we must address the nature of context and the uniqueness of every teaching & learning experience and factor this in to our models.

In designing our SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) programme of support and professional learning I was rightly accused of having the ‘Curse of Knowledge’ – loading too much information and research into the model to make it unwieldy; this is the first area to address. Stripping it back I have looked further at Hobson & Malderez and taken their five core aspects of a mentor – educator, model, acculturator, sponsor and psychological supporter. For observation and

feedback the mentor needs to embrace all of these and balance them appropriately. This starts with the very purpose of the observation itself – what is it there to achieve?

For those in ITE, being observed is part and parcel of every lesson, but how does it enhance the development of a teacher? Firstly, it needs to be a ‘purposeful examination of teaching’ (Bailey, 2011). Every lesson will be watched and judged, whether meaningfully or not - trainees know this. Mentors must not start the relationship badly by placing too much onus on it from the outset; they must foster the positive outcomes that can arise from feedback given wisely, contextually and sympathetically - all mentors need to beware the curse of knowledge and understand what it is like to learn to do something for the first time; novices need support, modelling and scaffolds. Observation must be a formative force for good – the evidence elicited from the observation must be used to give positive and development points of action to further improve practice.

One aspect of bias and subjectivity we must factor in to our model is what Fawcett (1996) refers to; that we ‘see what we are looking for’ and that we ‘look for only what we know’. Mentors, across domains and phases, have subject knowledge – they have experience.



However, this experience can manifest itself in that curse of knowledge outlined above – they forget what it is like to find something hard. This is where a more tailored, focused approach to mentor observation can be beneficial, and is one we are looking to promote.

Firstly, mentors might be in every lesson and watching every lesson unfold, but they don't have to be 'observing' it – the semantics come into play here but to 'look' and to 'see' are very different; we encourage trainee teachers to go to lessons with a clear focus of what to 'look for' in order to 'see' something of benefit; holistic, whole-standard lesson observations – either of a novice or by a novice of an expert – simply don't work; too much information that is too disparate, too transient, and, perhaps most debilitating, a lot of what happens in a lesson is context-specific and responsive – it is non-iterative, non-repetitive and, in the case of a novice observing an expert, non-replicable without the developed schema of the expert to underpin the reason for the action.

We must instil to mentors and trainees the belief that context is essential to good observation; context includes taking into account relative experience levels of those involved. Wragg (1999) places observations in context and places importance on the mentor/trainee relationship, underpinned by 'trust' and 'respect'; the trainee knows they

will be observed so in an equitable mentor/trainee relationship the observation becomes part of the development; part of the feedback, not the precursor to it. Shute (2008) likens good feedback to a good murder in that it requires three key aspects – '(a) motive (the student needs it), (b) opportunity (the student receives it in time to use it), and (c) means (the student is able and willing to use it)'; for student here read trainee; the novice status still applies, despite the relative age discrepancy! Shute also refers to both verification and elaboration in feedback; firstly affirmation that the right thing has been done or achieved, followed by a process where relevant cues are provided to the learner to enable further development and action.

So, for the purposes of consistency and appropriateness of lesson observation and feedback for trainees a model must be formed, and a model that is adaptive to circumstance. Firstly, Mentors should be planning what to look for and, as they are there for the entire lesson they will see it; they will also be aware of timings so know when to focus as an observer and when to be a supporting presence in the room.

Those who are not mentors may not be fully contextualized in terms of timings and therefore a 'drop in' (even for RQT) can be debilitating if they are not there at the right time; mentors should embrace the



opportunity to watch entire lessons unfold, even if they are only 'observing' for part of it.

Here's an example:

Agree the purpose and focus of the observation prior to it taking place; do not necessarily plan for the observation to be the entire lesson – centre it around the focus, linked to targets. However, don't place pressure on trainees to exemplify one particular skill at the detriment of others that are just forming; let the lesson flow. Focus on the 'how', even if the 'what' needs discussion first; enable improvement through focus and evidence, not a list of Teacher Standard ticks and crosses.

Model what success might look like; discuss examples and non-examples; give the benefit of your experience.

'Observe' until the focus for the observation has passed; before or after that simply be 'there' – no note-taking, no typing – be in the room as support.

In post-lesson feedback, use a shared and understood language – 'learn that' and 'learn how to by' to enable reflection both 'in' and 'on' the lesson ensure that trainees can learn to be responsive and proactive (Schon, 1983); they can act immediately and they can think about what needs to change next time –

create an action and a series of steps in the style of intent and implementation - promote reflection rather than defensiveness.

Give immediate chance to practice; ITT trainees may well be observed that afternoon, so make feedback immediate and response swift – back on the bike!

There has to be a thread; mentors mustn't give feedback on one thing, set a target unrelated and then look for other unrelated aspects next time – we must our plan observation of an ITT as a cumulative process aligned to the curriculum being followed by the trainee's provider and then underpin this with your own expertise and evaluation. We know that there are things that can be observed and things that happen behind the scenes; everything contributes to the sensible, accurate development profile of the trainee teacher.

The role of the mentor here is to support the curriculum of learning being followed by the trainee, so they need to be fully involved in not only its design but also clearly aware of its rationale; they become a key aspect of the implementation and therefore the impact. Mentors need to know how and why trainees are assessed, what training they are being given and what theory is the foundation for their development; if learning science is not a



key factor, let's say, then overloading learning science behind practical application at the wrong time can be detrimental. Yes, it gives the action a background but it might lead to too much thinking when perhaps action is more important. This is where teaching the

art of focused, reflection and formative discussion will be more valuable; framing feedback around evidence of practice and enabling evaluation.

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A narrative for mentoring

A think piece working paper by Rachel Lofthouse

I remember Gordon and Dave, my own PGCE mentors, who I was lucky enough to meet 30 years ago. They worked in two very different school contexts and mentored me through different phases of the PGCE year. The legacy of those mentoring relationships still live with me; the conversations that we had, the opportunities that they created. I remember watching them teach their classes and I recall that they were amongst the people that I wanted to emulate. As role models they were incredibly enthusiastic about our subject (geography) and perhaps even more importantly they were enthusiastic about their schools as communities of learners and were ambitious for the impact that their learners would have as they grew into adulthood. There was a genuine sense that as they mentored me that we weren't simply worrying about the lessons I was due to teach tomorrow. Although tomorrow's lessons did matter, we were thinking in a much more holistic and sustainable way about why my development as a teacher mattered.

A narrative for mentoring

The fact that mentoring creates a professional legacy should be central to our purpose in developing mentoring. It is essential to recognise the real power and potential of

mentoring in creating the future profession that teachers want and need, and that our pupils and students deserve. As educators there is reason to each become an advocate for mentoring. If we hold on to some truths about why mentoring matters and how it works well, we can be on firmer footing when we identify those cases where it isn't working sufficiently well and where we need to make amends.

When I think about mentoring, I think of about it as having a grand narrative. This narrative needs to be scrutinised, thought about and put into action. We cannot romanticise mentoring because it risks creating rhetoric, but we need a narrative of purpose, nonetheless. Think of mentoring as the start of a story of professional development and learning. Think about how that story will unfold. Think about the parts that we all play as characters in this narrative.

Sharing our stories of expertise

Whatever stage of our teaching career we are at there is always scope to enhance our expertise. We can become more knowledgeable and more informed, we can build a greater, wider repertoire of practice. We are entitled to seek support to do that.

Mentoring is a tried and tested way for teachers at all career stages to enhance their expertise. As we enhance our expertise we develop the skills sets and understanding that we need to work successfully in the multiple roles that we take on as teachers.

The pandemic has reminded us that sometimes mentors are immersed in the same professional learning contexts as their mentees. All teachers have been thrust into unexpected different roles and have been evolving their teaching to meet the challenges. Mentors do not necessarily have the answers that their mentees might need in this scenario. The pandemic made novices of us all and the expertise was being constructed along the way. We write our stories together.

Our stories tell of ups and downs

There will always be days when we question what impact our work has had, and worry about the mistakes we have made, but that is normal. There are days when things work well and there are days when things are relatively unsuccessful. What matters is that as we hold ourselves to account and allow other people to hold us to account, we do so in such a way that is generative and formative. We need to build these ups and downs into our own professional narratives. Doing so allows us to continue learning because we haven't had our confidence quickly undermined or

excluded ourselves from future roles in which we might have had real impact. Generative accountability is something we can enter into in an entirely humane and supportive way through the quality of mentoring relationships and the mentoring stance. Our stories unfold authentically over time.

Telling our stories

Mentoring provides us with inclusive opportunities to share our voice with others and to allow their voices to be heard. Being open to each other's stories through mentoring contributes to creating a profession which is as diverse as we need it to be, as multi-skilled and talented as we need it to be and as committed as we need it to be. As mentors we can raise up the voices of those people who enter our profession with such hope and ambition and allow their voices to contribute to the powerful narrative of education. Our unique stories matter.

Stories in which we belong

When we feel trusted then we step outside of our comfort zone and lean towards challenges. When we feel trusted then we do not hide the mistakes we make. When we feel trusted we are more likely to join conversations where problem solving is at the centre and where we acknowledge that we need each other to co-construct solutions for

a better outcome. Without working in a situation in which we feel trusted it is unlikely that we will feel that we belong. Mentors can support the transition from becoming a teacher to belonging in the profession.

Through a sense of belonging we feel at home and feel welcomed and valued. Teachers need to be able to tell stories of belonging through knowing that the contribution they are making is fundamentally important.

Mentoring that helps to create and sustain a

sense of belonging is critical. Our stories become entwined.

Mentoring as a compelling narrative

In the story I am writing my characters believe that to be a teacher is also to be a mentor and as we immerse ourselves in this compelling narrative of our profession takes on a vital and vibrant life of its own.

This short think piece is based on a keynote given at the BERA Teacher Education and Development SIG event on 17th Nov 2020.

You can access a video of the event here. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/media/how-could-coaching-and-mentoring-needs-to-be-reimagined-by-teacher-educators-to-support-initial-teacher-trainees-itts-and-early-career-teachers-ect>

Teacher preparedness: an analysis of mentors' discourse

A research working paper by Marc Turu

This working paper is a summary of the author's Ph.D. thesis (Turu Porcel, M. 2020).

Abstract

In England, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must satisfactorily complete a statutory period in schools under the supervision of a mentor who will judge their preparedness to become fully qualified. Given the importance of mentors' understanding of teacher preparedness it seems surprising that most research only captures NQTs self-reported perceptions. This research aims to analyse how mentors understand and construct teacher preparedness. 11 primary education mentors were interviewed to understand how discourse(s) shape their understanding of preparedness. A discourse analysis approach embracing a broader social science orientation was taken. Findings show that the construction of teacher preparedness was structured around compliance, knowledge, and teachers' and pupils' learning and that mentors used predominantly instrumentalist and managerial discourses. This research suggests that NQTs are being initiated to a narrow understanding of the wider possibilities in teaching, legitimising the idea of preparedness and good practice as uncontroversially objective. More emphasis on teaching as a research-based profession seems needed.

Introduction

The initial teacher education system in England is one of the most fragmented in the world. From university based to school-based routes. From undergraduate courses to PGCEs. From Teach First to Troops to teachers. Nevertheless, independently of the route taken, all new teachers must pass their NQT year under the mentoring of a more experienced teacher who will judge their preparedness. These mentors must use the Teacher Standards and their professional judgment to assess NQTs. However, most of the current research that explores teacher preparedness focuses almost exclusively on NQTs' self-reported perceptions. It seems surprising that the Department for Education collects self-reported data about their feelings of preparedness instead of exploring experienced teachers' and mentors' perceptions.

The nature of teacher preparedness, and particularly, what is perceived as good teaching depends on historical and contextual (legal, political, social, economic, religious) factors, and therefore, teaching and teacher preparedness is understood as relative rather than universal. People are immersed in discourses, some of which are privileged while others are delegitimised, allowing and

restricting the possibilities for action, as discourses shape the reality they are describing by the simple fact of talking about it.

Moore (2004) identified three dominant discourses in teaching and teacher education: *charismatic subjects*, *competent craftspersons* and *reflective practitioners*. A good teacher is *charismatic* according to the traditional imaginary, circulating in popular culture and films. Popular representations of good teachers often perceive them as possessing a strong personality which captivates and engages their pupils without the need for pedagogical training or subject knowledge. In the competent craftsperson discourse, it is argued that teaching can be reduced to a technical occupation in which good teaching can be described in standards and in terms of observable behaviours/skills. The reflective practitioner discourse is conceptualised as a research-based profession which not only embraces evidence informed decisions but also critical thinking about knowledge and practice.

Central to the research presented in this paper is the understanding that teaching is a political activity involving subjective pedagogies, and therefore one needs to analyse the taken-for-granted assumptions and discourse(s) that underpin daily practices in order to elicit what is constructed as prepared to teach. Since mentors and experienced teachers working alongside NQTs

are responsible for judging NQTs' preparedness, they have a critical role in defining what it is to teach and to be a teacher. For this reason, it seems increasingly important to understand how experienced teachers and mentors conceptualise preparedness and to explore how teachers understand teaching and the teachers' role, the characteristics of prepared teachers and what they value as critical to being prepared to teach.

The study presented in this paper was framed by the following aims:

- To understand how construction of teacher preparedness is shaped by discourse(s).
- To deconstruct the discourse(s) on teacher preparedness to understand what is valued.

Methodology

In order to explore how the idea of preparedness is constructed, participants were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were designed around broad topics: teachers' experiences with newly qualified teachers, what being prepared meant, lived experiences of good and bad teaching, or beliefs about quality teaching and teachers. A discourse analysis of the interviews was conducted. The approach taken is more of a broad social science orientation which is interested in practices, objects and subjects rather than with abstract linguistic structures.

In particular, what is of interest is not the nature of world or the alignment of people's accounts with an observable reality, but how people understand and give meaning to it, how their discursive accounts are constructed.

Interpretative repertoires are as used as analytical tool.

Repertoires can be seen as the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena. Any particular repertoire is constituted out of a restricted range of terms used in a specific stylistic and grammatical fashion.

(Potter and Wetherell, 1988, p.172)

Interpretative repertoires are a tool that allow us to access discourse(s) because they are rather coherent ways of speaking about the world. As such, any interpretative repertoire is constituted by a limited range of terms used in particular ways both rhetorically and

grammatically. Communities use repertoires as the basis for shared social understanding, what would be considered common sense.

The participants in this study are a mixture of experienced teachers and headteachers from primary schools. The demographics of the participants are shown in table 1.

Findings and discussion

The findings suggest similarities between head teachers' and teachers' construction of preparedness to teach. Teachers and head teachers constructed preparedness around similar characteristics: complying, knowing, teachers' learning and pupils' learning. The group of teachers also cited resilience as a key element of preparedness.

Pseudonym	Role	No. of student teacher mentored	No. of NQTs mentored
Amy	Y5	6	2
Becca	Y3 + SLT	+10	+10
Diana	HT	+10	4
Eve	HT	4	3
Fiona	Y5 + subject leader	5	2
Gloria	EY + KS1	6	2
Hailey	EY + KS1 + SLT	1	1
Jean	HT	6	4
Laura	KS1 + KS2	4	5
Nicole	Y1	4	3
Olivia	Y2	3	2

Table 1. Participant demographics

Preparedness as complying captures the assumption that teachers must align not only with external pressures such as Ofsted or SATs but also to practices that are established within schools. Preparedness as knowing is made up of different characteristics. Firstly, knowing the content of the curriculum although head teachers focused their attention almost exclusively on English and mathematics. Secondly, knowing adequate teaching techniques was highly valued by head teachers and teachers valued adaptability and risk taking. Thirdly, knowing pupils was valued by both teachers and head teachers as a way of being able to achieve better learning outcomes. Preparedness as learning captures the assumption that NQTs are only at the beginning of their professional journey and need to keep learning on the job. Reflection in the form of reflection-in-action

was valued by both groups as a way of adapting teaching in order to achieve the intended learning objectives. Finally, preparedness as pupil learning captures that assumption that pupils learn under the guidance of prepared teachers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the findings based on the discourses they draw upon.

The **instrumentalist discourse** is the predominant one among both teachers and head teachers. As discussed in the literature review, within this discourse there is an emphasis on objective knowledge and technique to achieve pre-established outcomes. Several characteristics were valued within this discourse: *Knowing the curriculum, knowing teaching techniques, knowing pupils, teachers' learning and reflection and pupils' learning.*

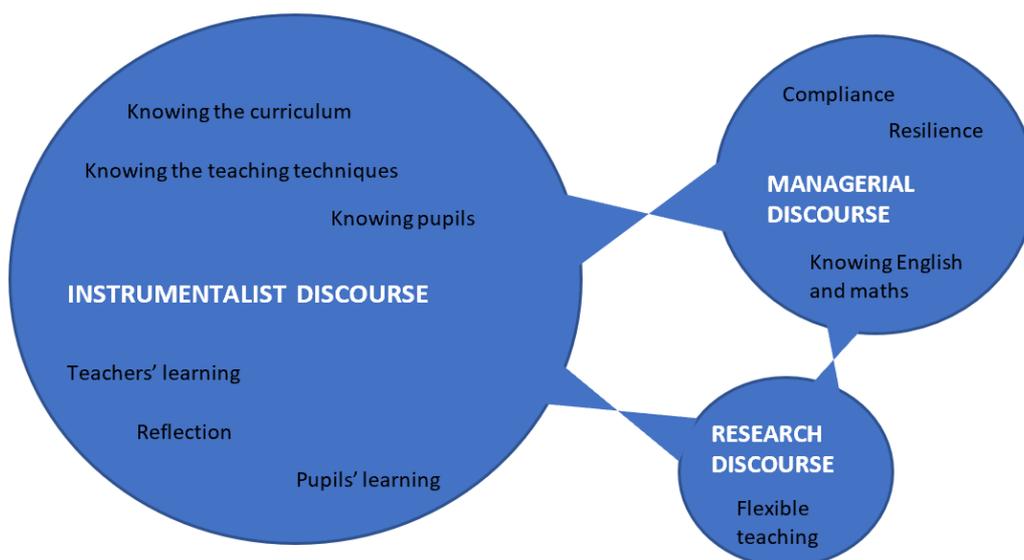


Figure 1. Discourses used to construct preparedness to teach.

The use of the **managerial discourse** among teachers and head teachers was unexpected. Within this discourse, there is a focus on performativity and the achievement of pre-established outcomes similar to the instrumentalist discourse. However, the rationale behind the implementation of specific teaching approaches and outcomes is based on organisation and accountability. Three characteristics of preparedness seem to be drawn from the managerial discourse: *compliance, resilience and knowing the content of the curriculum of English and mathematics.*

The third discourse that was used to construct preparedness to teach was the **research discourse** although it only seemed to be used by teachers and not head teachers. Teachers constructed a version of preparedness to teach wherein flexibility and adaptability are required to meet the needs of all students, and therefore teachers must go beyond standard teaching techniques. In this case, teachers constructed teaching as non-universal, and therefore rejected the notion of one-size-fits-all pedagogy.

The teachers and head teachers in this study seemed to also portray preparedness to teach from an almost exclusively restricted instrumentalist and managerial perspective. This understanding of practice is epistemologically based on technical rationality which claims that practice can be

rationalised into concepts and rules, and these would constitute the necessary body of knowledge for practice. However, this vision of teaching as a practice that can be instrumentally rationalised is criticised for being more interested in the 'how to' than in the 'why', separating facts from values, and therefore emphasising method, procedure and technique and forgetting the humanistic purpose of the teaching practice. Teaching is basically a purposeful activity, and not a list of techniques that teachers must apply, and therefore there is "a myriad of behaviours which help –or hinder- its purposes" (Winch and Gingell, 2004, p.36).

It seems surprising that preparedness conceptualised within the research discourse was almost absent in the construction of accounts presented in this research. In this scholar-teacher model teachers not only apply techniques, but research, study and critique their practices as an intellectual discipline. Good teachers should engage actively and critically with research to be able to evaluate its significance to their own circumstances and therefore, determine courses of action based on evidence but also on their own context

Conclusion

Over three decades ago, Giroux (1988) warned us of what he called the *proletarianization* of teachers work, the inclination to reduce teaching to the

application of specific techniques whose function is to implement an externally imposed curriculum instead of developing or critically adapting curriculum to meet the educational goals.

It was argued that in order to meet the needs of their pupils and help them achieve the expected learning outcomes, teachers must avoid rigid teaching approaches based on one-size-fits-all pedagogies. This position may be reflective of current trends to disrupt evidence-based practice and embrace a more flexible relationship with research evidence. As Biesta (2010) argued, in order to enrich the educational discourse, there must be a shift from a *causality* view of practice to a *complexity* view. The causality view of practice assumes there is universal knowledge, discovered through research, and the teachers' role is to apply it. By contrast, the complexity perspective assumes that research is always culturally and historically situated, and therefore vulnerable to the predominant discourses of its time.

There is evidence that shows that teacher training courses, particularly those that lead to QTS, put more emphasis on preparing teachers to be *classroom-ready* in terms of the practicalities of the day-to-day work: teaching techniques, behaviour management, content knowledge and bureaucracy. These aspects of teaching are important, but as McNamara, et al. (2014) suggested, the current teacher training environment mostly only engages in the "practice mode" instead of "practice and reflect mode". Unless there is a critical approach to teaching in which teachers reflect, for example, on their own subjectivities and the baggage they bring to the job, power relationships, ethics and pupils' rights, or social class and culture, the educational gap will at best remain or at worst increase. As already encouraged in the Carter review (2015, p.34), "training should encourage teachers to explore the big questions of educational purpose and value as well as develop their skills".

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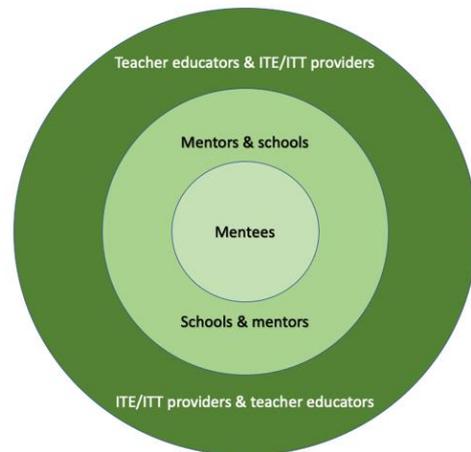
Mentoring in Education at a time of change: what should we hold on to and prioritise?

A Think Piece working paper by Emmajane Milton

I don't think there has ever been a time in living memory when we have been thinking about and delivering Education in such a dynamic and turbulent context. Internationally, recruitment and retention issues for teachers and headteachers abound, education systems the world over are being reformed in the pursuit of something 'more' and 'future proof' and on top of this we are all tackling the complexities that the global COVID-19 pandemic had brought. It's against this backdrop that I have been considering the implications for mentoring within educational contexts – never before has high quality mentoring been so important – it is crucial, I think, in responding to and meeting the challenges of all this uncertainty.

I wonder whether we need to think about re-prioritising and re-focusing on the value of mentoring, how to do it well and whose responsibility it is. I wonder whether we should be re-visiting what we already know but that might have been lost or have faded in the busyness of reacting to all the change and uncertainty. The more I have thought about this the more I wonder whether we should be thinking about not only those that need to be mentored but mentors themselves. I want to

think about - both - what mentors need to consider with their mentees, but also, and equally importantly, what teacher educators and initial teacher education providers need to think about with and for our mentors.



I find it helpful to think about these ideas through three concentric ring circles – with the mentees nested at the centre, surrounded by their mentors and their schools, surrounded by teacher educators and / or ITE / ITT providers. In considering and reflecting on this, eight key concepts have re-emerged or come in to focus that I feel are very important. Firstly, professional learning community - how and where we establish shared understandings, provide a safe learning environment - an environment that is mutual and reciprocal - that has plenty of opportunity for connection and is formed on

relationship building. In the same way as I think it takes 'a school to grow a teacher' (Milton et al., 2020a p.12). I think it takes an education community to help support and grow excellent mentors. Similarly, Rachel Lofthouse (2020) suggests 'we create each other in the profession'. So, for me this is twofold ... thinking about how we create that learning community for mentors - so that they, in turn together can get the support, enrichment, the professional learning that they need to enable them be the brilliant mentors they can and want to be with their mentees.

Secondly, there is something really important about making and prioritising time (despite how busy we are) - little and often - regular check-ins. Time that provides opportunities for dialogue, discussion and the rehearsing of ideas. Making time helps to establish trust and this is really important in creating a space that is reassuring, supportive, non-judgemental and that encourages openness and honesty. Thinking about this from the point of view of the mentor is essential - it is so important for mentors to work within an environment where they feel they can talk about their concerns, especially at this very unprecedented and unusual time. An environment where they have a community who understands them and that has time to listen and learn about the situations' they are facing. How do we make time to listen to, support and mentor mentors?

Next is having a **mentor orientation** in the same way as we might want or expect mentors to have a **teacher or mentee orientation**. How do we meet mentors where *they are* not where *we want* them to be? How do we make sure they feel equipped to undertake the role that they have been asked to take on? This idea is not very different to how we would want mentors to support their mentees - in assisting them in thinking about the role that they undertaking as practitioners ... and meeting them where *they are*.

This also relates to **valuing diversity** in mentor communities in the same way as we would want to value the diversity in a classroom. Mentors will be different ... mentors will approach things differently and there is much to learn from different approaches and ways of supporting mentees in their specific contexts (Daly and Milton, 2017). We need to be sure that our expectations of mentors are realistic and manageable - achievable and not yet another burden in a very difficult time. We have to ensure we are not 'tormentors' adding to the increased demands mentors are facing. Similarly, I think we would want mentors to make things manageable and not to 'torment' mentees. I guess what I'm talking about here is how we model behaviour - how do we as teacher educators and providers model the ways in which we want our mentors to work with their mentees? There is not one way to do this but we should want and commit to modelling practice - the

values, behaviours, approaches, care and the valuing of difference - with our mentors that we would want them to adopt and model with their mentees.

This brings me to **learning together and reciprocity**. Thinking about 'the essentials' of a mentor's role and in turn 'the essentials' of a mentee's role in this difficult and unfamiliar time. We may need to re-discover this, learn together and consider how that learning might be mutual. Can we think about it being shared? Can we think about how we can embrace the uncertainty within which we are operating and *get more comfortable with being uncomfortable*? Can we use this uncertainty as an opportunity to think differently? Doing it together is much easier than doing it alone ... we're all in this together ... adapting and learning, with and alongside each other. Problem solving and tackling challenges together – as teacher educators and providers with mentors and as mentors with our mentees.

Underpinning some of these ideas is the need to think about **listening carefully**. Listening and *not fixing*, reflecting ideas back towards each other and checking for understanding. This is about understanding where mentors and their mentees are coming from. Seeking to understand the experiences they are having, checking that we understand them deeply and in detail - not making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Sense making. This

is so important especially at the moment when we are asking mentors to adapt and undertake their role in new and unfamiliar ways. How carefully we listen to mentors provides a very strong cue as to how carefully we want them to listen to their mentees?

I also think that there is **no one way** ... there is **no blueprint** ... and this calls for deep and ongoing critical consideration and reflection ... mentoring in the moment ... being responsive from an informed perspective (Daly and Milton, 2017). Thinking about the particular settings teachers are working in, the children that they are working with, the learning environments they are situated within and the broader the school and community contexts. We need to embrace diversity and accept there isn't and can't be one way of being a mentor. Mentors, mentees and the contexts in which they operate - are unique - so mentoring approaches need to be similarly varied and bespoke and adaptable.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the value of **questioning ... of challenging norms and assumptions**. Despite the current situation everyone is working within, we still need to encourage disruption ... to inquire and seek to understand ... to foster agency and collaboration and to resist hierarchical and expert-novice notions (Milton et al. 2020b). There is no such thing as a 'right time' to do this ... we have to continue co-learning and

changing – that’s how we grow ... as a profession.

I’ve proposed number of key ideas that I think are more important than ever and I wonder whether we need to re-emphasise, re-visit, re-prioritise and re-focus on these for and with

mentors. Especially at the moment and in thinking about the future ... I think much rests on how well we nurture our mentors and school communities in order to support them to nurture and mentor and grow the teachers they work with. As they of course are growing future generations

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Impact and its ripples through time

A practice insight working paper by Elena Díaz and Adam Lamb

Elena

My bugbear about teaching

I love my job, I do. I feel an enormous sense of achievement every day, I have found a school that values me, and I really enjoy the time I spend in the classroom. If I won the lottery, I'd go back to work the next day.

There is one thing, though, that leaves me feeling empty about my job, something that can't be fixed and that won't get better. It's the fact that I never get to see the finished product. I invest hard work and emotional energy into my students. I coach them and push them. I spend my life thinking about how I can refine my practice for them and yet, I never get to see how they turn out. I never get to see what's become of them, the jobs they do, the families they raise. I get lots of hints along the way, don't get me wrong. I feel a genuine thrill every time I get a thank on results day; every time a little year 7 says *hola* to me in the corridor, every time a student says they want to do Spanish when they go to uni. I just never get to see it with my own eyes, I never get to see the product of my work.

Impact

Impact is an elusive reality. I know it exists, I have seen evidence that it's there. I regularly check the EEF's toolkit in search of evidence to inform my practice and I can see in black and white that interventions have impact. In fact, some interventions have had an immense impact on students.

It was impact that brought me to teaching, I wanted to do something meaningful with my life. 18 years down the line, I have often wondered how much impact I have had.

Looking for the future in the past.

I remember having a tough time as a young teacher, particularly in my first year. I was 23, just a kid, really. An inexperienced, female, foreign teacher in an all-boys school in inner-city Sunderland. I had a timetable packed full of KS3 classes and taught in many rooms. I taught some notorious characters at the time, one year 9 class, in particular, made me dread coming into school. They would occupy my thoughts all week, and my anxiety got more intense as their lesson got nearer. It got to a point where I would spend the weekend thinking about this class. As a coping mechanism, I taught myself a trick. Every time they popped into my mind, I'd make myself

think about my lovely little dual linguists class. Eventually, thoughts of the year 9 class would be automatically replaced with thoughts of my much nicer students. It worked and, to this day, when classes are difficult, I always remind myself that schools are full of wonderful children who make their teachers very happy.

The answer

The answer to my wondering about impact, came to me some 15 years after. On a CPD session someone recognised me in the room and brought back some memories. It happened to be Adam, one of my lovely dual linguists that was then becoming a teacher himself. I could not be more proud of him. He has not only become a passionate teacher himself, but he is in charge of training the next generation. I have asked him to write some recommendations about mentoring for you, I'm sure you will agree he is incredibly knowledgeable.

I also, quite humbly, could not be more proud of myself and my colleagues, because Adam said to me, and I'll remember this forever, that it was because of us and, of course, of his lovely, supportive parents, that he got to go to university and to become the educator that he is now.

As I see him shape the minds of hundreds, and through his mentees, of thousands of students, I see clearly that every tough lesson,

every blue Sunday, every sleepless August night, were worth it, as I can finally see the ripples, which I know will be there long after I'm gone.

Adam

Back in 2007 in the depths of GCSE Spanish revision, I remember Elena showing my class a PowerPoint with a black background with verbs on rotation. Our job? To translate them into Spanish. This was a regular feature of our lessons. What I didn't realise was that Elena, the expert, had identified a weakness in our knowledge and had sought out opportunity for us to deliberately practice the weakness in a way to remedy it and become routine. It was one incredibly small and practicable piece of knowledge that we needed in order to gain proficiency at Spanish, but one that led to great impact in the way in which we communicated in the language. The result? Improved confidence and a feeling of having made noticeable improvement to our language development - thanks to Elena's strategic diagnostics and efforts to get us to focus on our weakness.

In my current role as a whole-school lead practitioner, I believe that just like when I was a novice at Spanish, colleagues in their early career years need the chance to practise specific areas of their classroom practice, diagnosed by more experienced practitioners, in order to rapidly improve. My own

experiences of receiving feedback and being able to put it into practice with my mentor as a trainee teacher and subsequently as a newly-qualified teacher in Gateshead demonstrated just how important it is to have the time to practise the item of feedback you were given in order to grow. The importance of putting this feedback into practice was that if I didn't, behaviour would go awash within a second. It was often a fight for survival and they knew for me to survive, and flourish, I needed to deploy the feedback they were giving me.

Fortunately, I am in a school now where this kind of practice exists for all aspects of teaching – from behaviour to questioning. As a whole school, we have adopted deliberate practice as a key part of our CPD offering; however, as part of our offering to trainee teachers, it is a non-negotiable.

During our professional studies programme, trainee teachers engage with reading surrounding an aspect of practice. Myself and my colleague model an example, before asking student teachers to note down what they noticed during the episode and what elements were displayed from the prereading we had set. From this, student teachers set success criteria, against which we all collectively peer assess an episode that on that aspect, before receiving feedback – then doing it again. This allows us to give feedback

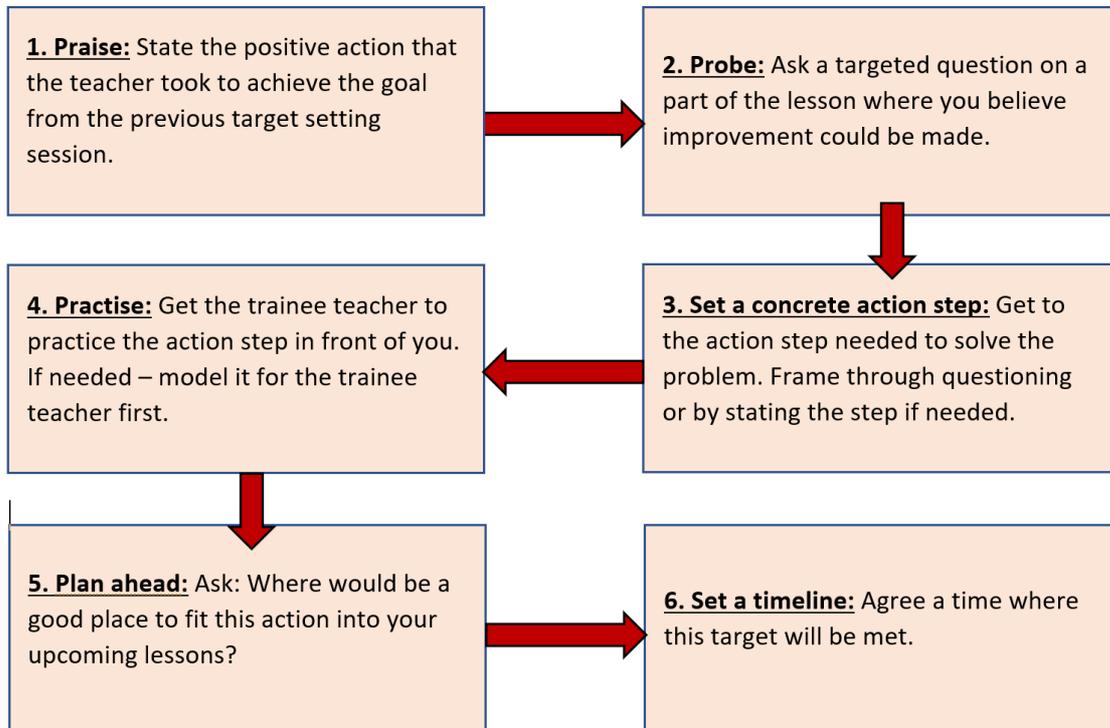
in the moment and most importantly, by asking the trainee teacher to repeat immediately after feedback, they tend to do it better and feel that they are making instant progress.

But what's more important than having this kind of deliberate practice just from myself and my colleague is that it is reinforced by mentors. We expect the time for practice, based on an actionable target, during hourly mentor meetings. To provide the scaffold and the dialogue in which this can effectively take place, we have turned the Uncommon Schools 6 Steps for Effective Feedback (as found at (and found on next page)

<http://www.esc4.net/Assets/07sixstepsforeffectivefeedback-003.pdf>)

We have found that the structure provides structure to mentor meetings when discussing feedback, ensures that feedback is specific (you would not have enough time to go through this cycle, with the practice, in one meeting if done properly) and most importantly, that the feedback is acted upon through the setting of a follow-up timeline. Hopefully this extra practice will help solve some of the challenges new teachers face, placing strategies into their repertoire so that they become innate in their practice – just as conjugating verbs became an innate part of my ability to speak Spanish through deliberate practice.

A simplified breakdown of the steps can be found below:



Why Mentoring and Coaching Matters when starting as a Teacher Trainee

A think piece working paper by Lizana Oberholzer

A Think -piece on how mentoring can make a difference exploring two scenarios to help facilitate effective learning to help teachers survive and thrive in a turbulent education landscape.

Sally is on her journey to learn how to teach. She is excited about the role, but is very nervous, as she is fresh out of university, with a few hours of volunteering under her belt. She feels unsure what to expect. She chose to embark on a school-base salaried course, to enable her to cope with her student loan, accommodation, and to enable her to take care of herself. However, she is not sure what to expect, and she is excited, but to be honest, 'nervous' does not begin to describe what she is feeling at this stage, she is scared.

Questions whirl through her mind. What if the learners don't listen? What if no one cares what she has to say? What if she cannot cope?

Her journey can unfold in a variety of different ways:

Scenario 1: Sally arrives at her new school-based employment school, and is handed a 90% timetable. Naively, she feels excited about the groups she was allocated. She is

slightly worried about the fact that she will be teaching quite a lot, and there is no allocated mentor time. She is informed that her teacher training sessions will be delivered in twilights after school, and some Inset days. They are still deciding on who will be supporting her, but it is likely to be a young upcoming teacher in his 3rd year. She tried to introduce herself, but he was rushed off his feet. He is head of department, and is also involved in a whole school role for this year, to help him progress to senior leadership. He is clear that she needs to be a self-starter, and he does not have time for someone who does not have a 'can-do' attitude. Sally suddenly feels very alone on this journey, and frightened, as she might lose her job, with this sink-or-swim approach, and she is still very green. She has not even tried to write on a whiteboard yet, and does not know how to plan lessons either. She is struggling to see how she can survive the first week let alone the full academic year.

Scenario 2- Sally attends an induction session at her new school, and the induction tutor, and CPD lead of the school welcomes her with a handy pack of information which outlines her next steps, timetables for both her school

engagement and training, which is a 30% teaching timetable for the first 6 weeks, with a gradual progression to 50% teaching until she feels more confident. She also received her timetable for Mondays, which is her allocated day for her Teacher Training Course. At lunch time on the induction day, mentors arrive to have lunch with the group. Sally is introduced to her mentor, Tom. He provides her with a pack of information about her department, the first half term's medium-term plan with guidance on what to read and what to prepare. Tom points out on the timetable when their mentor meetings are scheduled in for too. He reassures Sally that it does not matter where she starts on the journey, his role is to support her every step of the way. He understands that she is very new to teaching, but he feels it is an opportunity for them to make a real difference. Sally goes home after the day, feeling that she is in safe hands, and she is enthused to start reading and to familiarise herself with all the information she was given on the day. She is really looking forward to becoming a teacher, and to work with Tom and the rest of the team.

When looking at the above scenarios for the same person and the possible experiences she might have, it outlines two possible situations unfolding for trainees across the country. There are many other experiences too, reflecting many positive experiences or challenging ones. However, these first

experiences are often lasting, and might impact on whether the mentee develops well, has an opportunity to grow, reflect and engage well with the course on offer. These two scenarios not only outline two possible approaches to teacher training, it also highlights different curriculum offers. However, more importantly, it highlights how different mentoring approaches might impact too.

Scenario 1 highlights how Sally, very new to the world of teaching, is thrown into the deep. She has a decision to make she can either decide to sink or swim. When looking at the importance of feeling safe, as outlined by Maslow (1948 as cited in Cameron and Green, 2015), it is key when we want learners/ teacher trainees, to feel that they belong, to open up for learning, and can self-actualise. Sally's doubts and concerns, feeling under threat, highlights that she is becoming more and more aware of the fact that she will need to work hard to survive. Her potential mentor's response to her, suggests that he too is in survival mode, and coping with the challenges he faces, and there is little capacity to meet her needs or to make her feel welcome or safe. Van Nieuwerburgh and Love (2019) emphasise the importance of ensuring colleagues' needs are met. They stress that when developing others, we are also committed to the wellbeing of the colleagues we look after. Sally's experience with her potential Scenario 1 mentor, left her feeling

uncertain, and worried. It is imperative for those involved in teacher development to understand what the impact of such a first impression and experience might have.

For some this might trigger a response, where they thrive as they enjoy the challenge, but for most, feeling safe, and supported is an important first steps to enable them to settle well. It is interesting, when we look at schools' practices with new learners, they make every effort to make students feel welcome, and settled. The same principals apply when new colleagues, who aim to learn to teach start in those contexts too. They need time as novices to find their way, understand the context, grasp the policies, and ways of working (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1985 and Blanchard et al, 2018).

Scenario 2 illustrates, how such an induction can take place, and how the teacher trainee, is welcomed to the profession, feeling safe - they can be brave, and allow themselves to open up to learning and be vulnerable (Brown, 2015). This enables them to engage

with supportive learning conversations to allow them to unlock their potential, and to move beyond the novice phase, to advance beginners and beyond to have a long career in teaching. Sally felt enabled by her day, she felt that she had made the right decisions. She could focus on her learning rather than fight for her life, to become the teacher she needs to be for her learners. The school-based training provider considered her curriculum carefully, provided her with helpful information, and provided her with time, and a supportive understanding mentor, to take her by the hand to ensure that she is able to progress well. Tom's welcome, guidance, and reassurance already made a difference... and for these reasons, mentoring and coaching plays an imperative role in the development, and continued support of future and current teachers, to make a good start, that will stand them in good stead to later on help others in the same way – to pass the touch, and to continue to ensure that children have committed, confident teachers to help them learn.

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Supporting student teachers: the impact of involving in-service teachers on an initial teacher education programme

A Research Working Paper by Brian Marsh and Mark Deacon

The context of the study reported here was the primary and secondary PGCE programmes in an English school-university partnership. In order to enhance the support provided to student teachers, 7 teachers from partner schools were seconded over two years on a one-day per week basis with an additional 2 teachers seconded for 2 days per week over this period. These were experienced middle and senior leaders who brought current and relevant classroom experience to this role. They contributed to programme planning and teaching. However, their primary role was to undertake additional placement visits and in-school mentor support and training over and above those undertaken by their university tutor. These were called 'coaching visits' – a term coined by the student teachers.

The induction of student teachers into the profession during their training period is often understood to be a complex and emotionally demanding learning process (Murray, 2012). They require both time and guided support. Within school-university partnerships are two key people who are pivotal in this role – the school-based mentor and the university tutor. They both provide time, support and guidance, yet that support and guidance often fails to realise its full potential. One of the reasons for this is that both the school-based mentor and the university tutor have a

judgement dimension to their multifaceted roles (Hobson and Malderez, 2013, Murray, 2012)

Characteristically, and as is the case of the school-university partnership being considered here, the student teacher learning is situated in:

1. school communities – where student teachers start to develop their professional practice knowledge; i.e. their craft-knowledge. School-based mentors are integral to this process;
2. higher education communities – where development of propositional knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and subject knowledge for teaching occurs. University tutors are integral in this community.

Although partnerships vary in nature, they work in terms of initial teacher education to link 'knowledge *about* teaching and learning (academic study) with knowledge *of* teaching and learning (professional practice knowledge)' (Conroy et al., 2013). In terms of professional learning, Mutton (2016) addresses the pedagogical framework of partnership and considers student teacher learning in terms of what shared understanding there is regarding:

1. what they need to learn
2. how they might best learn these things
3. the site of that learning

Elsewhere (Marsh, 2020), one of us has considered the development of student teacher learning in school-university partnerships using an activity theory analysis and note that opportunities for significant rich student teacher learning occurs when boundary crossing occurs between school communities and university communities. The boundary crossing of activity systems affords opportunities for expansive learning, allowing for the development of new patterns of activity and new ways of working. However, this process is complex and fraught with difficulties. Student teachers often associate theory with university teaching and practice being the responsibility of schools. This can be understood from the perspective of student teacher learning taking place in two different communities of practice (Wenger, 1999), but as Eraut (2004) and Smagorinsky et al. (2003) both comment, the differences in both culture and context make the transfer of knowledge between the educational setting and the placement setting particularly difficult.

The focus of our research in this particular partnership was to examine the impact of experienced in-service teachers providing non-judgemental coaching support to student teachers during their teaching practice.

Hobson and Malderez (2013) highlight the problem regarding some mentor judgements on the practice of student teachers. They indicate that this compromises the mentoring relationship and its potential benefits and refer to this as judgementoring. Furthermore, Lofthouse and Thomas (2014) propose that judgementoring practices are cultured by performativity agendas in schools. We would argue that the QA visit of the university tutor has a similar effect.

The involvement of in-service teachers in ITE programmes is not new. Back in 2001, Cope and Stephen indicated that using in-service teachers in the ITE programme supported the link between the school and university settings. In this study the seconded teachers were not substituting for either the school-based mentor or university tutor but brought additional capacity in support of the student teacher. It was important for them to be seen and understood as having no involvement in the judgement of the student teacher's performance.

Our research question, therefore, is, "*What is the impact of supporting student teachers on teaching practice by in-service teachers who do not contribute to the judgement of the student teacher's performance.*"

Methodology

The shape of the support visits undertaken by these seconded teachers was developed from a framework of questions posited by Spear et al. (1997) regarding feedback mentors give to student teachers. With the aim of providing non-judgemental support, the principles underpinning each visit were:

1. to observe some teaching undertaken by the student teacher – the amount depended upon the student teacher’s timetable
2. to focus on a small number of pre-determined points. These points were identified from a dialogue between the mentor and student teacher and communicated to the in-service support teacher prior to the visit. These were sometimes modified during the visit as a consequence of what was seen and / or discussed
3. to help the beginning teacher engage in reflective evaluation
4. to identify and emphasise the important development point(s) that the student teacher should focus on after the visit – these were agreed with both the student teacher and mentor
5. feedback would be primarily verbal and given at the point of the visit with a short, written summary, including development points, sent to the student teacher within a few days of the visit

Additionally, opportunity was offered for the seconded teacher to meet with the mentor. A case study approach was adopted in order to undertake the evaluation as it facilitated a rich in-depth exploration of this particular intervention. It was a longitudinal case study which involved 2 separate cohorts of student teachers – each cohort being involved over a 1-year period.

In order to evaluate the impact of this intervention data was gathered, each year, from a range of sources including:

1. semi-structured interviews that were conducted with each of the seconded teachers
2. feedback reports following each coaching-intervention visit
3. student teacher data through an end of training course questionnaire and a semi-structured interview at the end of their second teaching practice

Evaluating the impact of this type of intervention is problematic. Student teachers in England commence their teacher education in a strong performativity culture that affects both sites of their learning experience. In-service teachers are frequently rated against (1) the quality of their teaching (often evidenced through lesson observation) and (2) pupil outcomes. While student teachers experience these pressures either directly or

indirectly we take the view expressed by Barnes and Solomon (2016) that more subtle measures that acknowledge professional agency and reflection were needed. Thus, we interrogated the data for evidence of reflective practice, changes in classroom practice, agency, professional and social capital, efficacy and confidence

Findings

There were 3 key issues identified by the student teachers in their interviews and from their questionnaires. These were:

1. Timing of the coaching / intervention visit – the logistics required a timetabled approach to setting up the visits whereas the student teachers were wanting visits at the point of their need. Wherever possible flexibility was used
2. Trainees were the primary identifiers of issues that were addressed on the visit (mentors were generally supportive of this)
3. The nature of the visit – the student teachers commented that:
 - a. the visits were non-judgemental in nature and seen as separate from the formal observations of the mentor and the quality assurance observations undertaken by the university tutor. Comments showing this include,

“having a lesson observation which was not an official observation was useful”

“on my second visit he had a number of simple but effective techniques for me to try which was great. This meant I could add something to a lesson - be it a behavioural control techniques / ideas for engaging pupils who finished a task quickly and see a result which was great. I think it is important to have a visit from someone who is not there to judge you as such, but give support”

b. feedback was focussed and formative and was given verbally at the time with a short written reflective summary provided a few days later. This is reflected in the comment,

“coaching meetings were the only time I really got that focused, one to one advice on one topic, with time to discuss how I could implement the suggestions”

c. the visits were personalised and described as responsive and supportive of the student teacher’s needs. This is seen the student teacher comments,

“on my visit I really needed a pick-up and someone to tell me that I was not useless and could do this - which is exactly what he did”

“I have greatly appreciated both coaching visits, not only has he given me new ideas to try with my classes but also given me a bit of an emotional boost too”

All the school-based mentors said that they valued this coaching support. They appreciated the opportunity of supporting their trainee in the framing of the visit by highlighting 1 (occasionally 2) areas of focus and were willing to support the on-going work of the trainee in responding to the development target following coaching visit. On a number of occasions, the mentor would use a non-contact period to take part in the coaching session. Additionally, they expressed appreciation of support for themselves in terms of clarification of partnership documentation and support in making judgements against the standards. Interestingly they spoke of this in terms of not talking to someone who quality assures their work. In particular they saw this as peer support and it being different from university tutor-mentor support (although that too was valued).

Discussion & Conclusion

So, what appears to be happening? The seconded teachers facilitate a bridging of the gap between partner schools and the university which is supportive of the student teachers' early professional development.

They appear to facilitate rich student teacher learning both school and university communities. This appears to happen on several levels.

On a personal level the non-judgemental coaching intervention provides an opportunity for the student teachers to reflect on and talk about difficult issues. Wilson and Demetriou (2006) comment that beginning teachers suffer when they bottle their thoughts and do not actively seek help. The sense of not feeling valued seems to have a deep negative effect. It seems that these in-service teachers support and enhance the development of the student teachers' self-belief.

A second level where student teacher learning is facilitated is the development of their practice. One student teacher used the word '*advocacy*', as though the seconded teacher is an advocate between the 2 communities. One important effect of this was that many student teachers felt they had been given 'permission' to try things out. The perceived teacher behaviours required by both schools and university (whether real or otherwise) were interpreted by the seconded teacher. This appears to have promoted teacher efficacy and professional agency as their efforts and activities were now seen to be within their abilities.

We were also able to identify from a number of student teachers and their mentors that the impact had a longer-term developmental effect in that the student teachers' confidence rose, reflection-on-action became stronger and more focussed and that they were more expansive in the teaching activities used. We propose that this is part of the development of their teacher identity.

The in-service teachers seem to

1. bring greater understanding / knowledge of both school and university systems
2. be able to interpret both (for both the student teacher and mentor)
3. bring school into the university and also bring university into school

In defining this role, we see this as being non-judgemental. The coach is 'perceived' by the student teachers as being 'outside the system'. Thus, the student teachers speak freely without fear of judgements being made

about what they say. It seems to develop and enhance school-university partnership relationships in ways that hitherto have not happened:

1. School mentors talk to peers as opposed to university tutors (*this is not to demean the mentor-tutor relationship*)
2. It brings an increased depth of understanding to both the school and the university as the in-service teachers add recent and relevant experience
3. The role is supportive of mentors
4. It is separated from outcomes

While we believe that the findings of this study contribute to the discourse of mentoring and coaching student teachers, we caution against generalising the conclusions as case studies make no claims to be typical. The legitimacy is drawn from phronesis as distinct from theory as the findings relate to "practical reasoning, craft knowledge and tacit reasoning" (Thomas, 2011).

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Ethics as critical practice in coaching

A think piece working paper by Charmaine Roche

What do we do when the codes that we have relied on, that are embedded in coaching stance or coaching models, come into conflict with our professional wisdom and/or our personal beliefs of what is right or wrong? And our sense of the limitations imposed on coaching by what organisations or clients expect?

In asking these questions I am moving us from the traditional way of thinking about ethics to what is described as ***ethics as a critical practice**. When we question the basis of the ethical or moral codes we follow or take for granted in the form of accepted **practices** rather than as overt codes of conduct. For example, the coaching stance of neutrally, holding a non-judgemental, non-directive space for our clients - we all understand the power of this, but when and where do we feel the limitations?

Hetty Einzig in 'The future of coaching: vision leadership and responsibility in a transforming world', published in 2017 asks:

"Is it tenable to persist in the traditional coaching stance of moral neutrality - the Switzerland of the helping professionals? We know in truth, there is no such thing - we all relate to the world through the prism of our own unconscious beliefs.

While clearly the coaches principle offering is to listen, to reflect, to provide a thinking space, to what degree should a coach be able to form and articulate a coherent philosophy, are we alive to the voice of our own conscience, and what does it say to us? And to what degree should the coach be transparent or even overt about their values base, in the way they might outline their theoretical training to clients, and if not, what right does the coach have to call foul - based on what? These are the kinds of questions I believe coaching is facing today."

What role should coaching have in the big ethical debates of our time in relation to gender, race, equality, disability rights, climate emergency etc?

Critical reflection through co-coaching practice

I put this question to the 9 coaches who attended an AC CCF event I facilitated. The discussion amongst the 10 coaches present generated other questions:

- What do we risk losing if we go too far down this road?
- What are the limits of working explicitly with your values as a coach?
- When we talk about values are we referring to the personal values of the coach or the practical wisdom and values

inherent in the coaching approach and tools used by the coach in service of their clients and our the basis upon which we promote our services and contract with clients and sponsors of coaching in organisations?

- When challenging the values of a client how much weight does our system of values carry against theirs?
- As Hetty Einzig puts it, on what basis do we call foul?

Our exploration of coach neutrality within the context of one to one client work took up the next phase of the session.

In our co-coaching practice groups, we formed triads with the observer focusing on how the coach's values informed the coaching approach and what impact this had on the coachee. Both coach and coachee shared their observations too.

I played the role of coachee in my practice group and the discussion was fascinating. Our aim was to uncover the moral compass, values and practical coaching wisdom unpinning the coaching process being observed.

Neutrality may be the wrong word

When my coach fed back her self-observations she described the techniques she used, when we probed further she talked about the underpinning philosophy drawn from the work of psychologist Hans Eysenck and made explicit that what she was valuing was my essential wholeness and my

sense of agency. Her reading of the term 'neutrality' was the importance for her of standing back from my issue, to avoid being drawn into it. My reading of this well-established core principle of person-centred coaching is that it is not a moral or values free space. This neutrality is itself an expression of consciously held values that intuitively informs the work of this coach. Perhaps, neutrality is not the right word to describe what is happening here. In the coach's stance we have an embodiment of her ethical, relational values.

My experience of this as her coachee was one of feeling validated, safely held in this space and empowered to look at a situation that was overwhelming me, with some objectivity myself, using methods evoked by the coach. I did experience a feeling of liberation. I did not feel a conflict between her person-centred approach and my more systemic lens. The problem I shared was rooted in my lived experience as a black woman, my coach was a person racialised as white. She did not need to have experienced what I was experiencing to help me shine a light on it. Her ability to listen without judging created space for me. I was able first to acknowledge the presence of shame in my issue and then by giving it a shape, weight and colour in response to her question- locate it as belonging not to me, but to the way in which I had/was internalising a racialised view of myself – a classic

example of how internalised oppression shows up in individual psychological states. That of course does not complete the exploration of neutrality. Because while a coach is free in her face to face work to 'control' the space, to create the conditions for holding this space for her client, to operate freely in line with her values and moral compass, what about coaching in organisations where there may be multiple stakeholder interests to manage or when we are coaching clients whose views and attitudes are not aligned with ours. Two examples from recent conversations with coaches:

1. A client in the closing stages of a session makes an overtly anti-Irish racist remark. As an anti-racist how does he respond?
2. A coach is unsure how to contract with a sponsoring organisation for her work with three male coachees who are being groomed for succession to partnership in a company dominated at the top by males. They have tried in the past to recruit females but failed to retain women on the leadership track. As a coach commissioned to work with these future leaders individually can she do what she feels would be more useful and seek to work more systemically with them as a group in the interests of a more sustainable future for the company that embraces diversity?

If in either of these cases the coach remains silent and does not offer some challenge or resistance then we have collusion. Ethics as critical practice would move the coach to open up the unspoken.

"Ethics as critical practice is disruptive."

Derrida

Looking at our practice from the perspectives of the values embedded in them was disruptive, making the unconscious, conscious.

Contracting

I will end this reflection with my current thoughts about the questions raised:

Does a coach give up all agency in the practice of holding a safe space for the client? Surely this space cannot be held if the coach does not also feel safe, present and validated in the process. Coaching is a co-creative process, there needs to be equality for the relations of power to be free to flow in both directions. Coaches manage the power dynamics between them and their client through the process we call contracting, both psychological contracting and procedural contracting. Both forms are ongoing and continuous in any healthy coaching relationship.

This also means being proactive before we begin work about the values and moral compass that guides our work. For example, we contract as coaches committed to anti-racism, quality, equity, inclusion, and diversity. We establish our responsibility to

share, without compromising confidentiality, any intelligence we glean through our work about organisational culture with those who commission us into the organisation. We share the same with individual clients we contract with, this gives us permission, while not removing the discomfort, to challenge our client when the need arises.

Assuming we are successful in securing the work on that basis, we need to be brave enough to hold that ground with clients who may be resistant, or avoidant or unaware, or hostile and being willing to walk away from work that does not help us to hold our integrity. This is where neutrality in the classical sense, is tantamount to complicity with oppressive and unsustainable practices. To blindly focus our work, in the spirit of performativity, on the bottom line (our own as well and the companies we work with) without due consideration of wider social and ecological impacts or consequences. It is my view that it will prove worth our while to put a stake in the ground for what is right over what may seem expedient. There is a thirst for integrity in the world.

Links & References

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The future of coaching: vision leadership and responsibility in a transforming world, Einzig, 2017.

[The Future of Coaching Podcast with Hetty Einzig & Naomi Ward.](#)

On the other side of this it would seem equally damaging to hold coaching hostage to our personal campaigning zeal. I have experience from my own personal history of political activism of how necessary to be vigilant because 'purpose' can so easily ossify into orthodoxy, thus becoming a new form of blindness or despotism.

As coaching evolves into becoming a more openly values driven space there is a fine line to tread. Remaining critically aware, open, and connected to the real work (not just the theoretical) in service of healthy social relationship and use of power is crucial to retaining balance.

However, this is premised on reflections of work carried out by credentialed coaches, who belong to professional bodies and undergo supervision. There is a whole coaching industry that remains unregulated, much practice that is shallow, uncritical, promiscuous, mercenary or simply naïve. All of which risks doing harm.

I would love to hear your take on these questions.

Should the planet be on the coaching agenda?

A think piece working paper by Rebecca Raybould

This think piece reflects on the importance of considering the planet during the coaching process.

Introduction

As for many people, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for me to engage in reflection on the opportunities for change in the education system, and my role as a coach and leader of professional development in enabling these changes. I whole-heartedly support the important themes generated by the CollectivED symposium considering the “imperatives and opportunities for change in the education system” and argue that it is particularly important to pay attention to enacting a “vision for a sustainable life on a planet with finite resources” (Roche, 2020, p8).

The increasing climate-related disasters and extinction rate are giving us clear messages that we cannot wait until life has returned to ‘normal’ to take action on this matter. If we want our planet to be inhabitable for future generations of children, we need to take action now.

Of course, it is easy to make such a statement but more challenging to work out what this means in practice. I have been lucky enough

to participate in conversations with other professionals that are helping surface some of the opportunities for coaches. Clearly this is an issue where we are all truly in it together and a collaborative approach is particularly powerful.

A unique opportunity

The pandemic has enabled us to see that we can and should do things differently. During lockdown many of us changed our daily working patterns and we saw that in a relatively short space of time wildlife flourished and carbon emissions dramatically reduced. We considered the way in which we live our lives, educate our children, and carry out our professional endeavours, and realised that these were not always in alignment with our aims and values. As the CollectivED symposium demonstrated many school colleagues recognise the imperative for change within education, and the opportunities to do this.

At this time there has also been increasing interest in coaching as a form of professional development that works with educators and attends to their well-being and professional effectiveness. Teachers and leaders see the potential of coaching to bring about positive change.

So if we take these opportunities together we can see that this is indeed a unique opportunity: we can see the need to take action about the planet and the need to develop our education system; we have experienced that change can happen and can make a difference; and we have interest in using coaching to enable positive change.

If we recognise this unique opportunity for coaching to help teachers and leaders develop themselves and their schools in ways that meet the needs of the children and the planet we need to pay some attention to the ethical issues that arise.

‘Permission’ from coaching professional bodies: an opportunity for change

As coaches, the Global Code of Ethics guides us to recognise that we should “put ...client’s interests first but at the same time safeguard that these interests do not harm the interests of the sponsor” (Association for Coaching et al. , 2016). This view has been questioned; for example, Hawkins (2017) notes the importance of considering the needs of the clients’ stakeholders, and Blakey and Day (2012) highlight that the coach has a responsibility to benefit the coachee and wider society. In education Cordingley et al. (2015) highlight that the wider evidence shows that effective professional development has a strong focus on pupils’ needs and this focus is of course included in

the National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching (2005). I imagine many coaches in education would consider that ethical practice involves attending to the needs of the coachees/ professional learners and the pupils they are responsible for.

The recent Global Statement from the professional bodies for Coaching, Supervision & Mentoring provides a useful ‘top down’ opportunity for coaches and helps to give us ‘permission’ to explore how we attend to the needs of the coachee and to the wider needs of the systems they are embedded in. This recognition by coaching organisations across the world that coaches need to adapt their practice to “address the reality and urgency of the climate emergency” is powerful (Association of Coaching et al., 2020). But going back to Fullan’s (1994) points, change is needed from the ‘ bottom up’ as well as from the top. Professional discussions amongst coaches are helping to sow the seeds of such change.

Climate Coaching Alliance: an opportunity for professional discussion about how to sow the seeds of change

A recent Climate Coaching Alliance event brought coaches from across the globe together to reflect on the ‘permissions’ that were needed to enable action. The Alliance is an open -access organisation committed to facilitating discussion about how coaches can attend to the needs of Earth. Whilst there was

a recognition by participating coaches that the Global Statement was a valuable starting point it also became clear that coaches are considering the permissions they need from themselves and their clients. Many coaches spoke of the need to let themselves be brave enough to put the planet on the agenda in their professional lives.

Many also spoke about how they could gain permission from the client to bring this issue into coaching conversations. There was a broad spectrum of thought. Some felt that when first setting up a contract/ learning agreement with their coachee they would explain why they would want to include the planet on the agenda and check out whether the coachee was happy for this to be the case. At the other end of the spectrum some coaches felt that they did not need to do this. The planet's needs are so great that this gives any permission needed. For some it was a case of us as coaches needing to seek permission from future generations *not* to put this on the agenda.

This is of course only the beginning of many conversations which are needed to explore issues such as how we attend to the strong emotional reaction that discussion about climate change can evoke and how coaches react if coachees do not want the planet on the agenda.

Personal steps towards putting the planet on the agenda:

As an individual coach I am committed to making use of these opportunities and as part of this journey I am

- using initial contracting/ set-up discussions with coachees and with supervisees to find out about their values and mission and to share my own commitment to putting the well-being of the planet on the agenda. I am setting this up in the spirit of being curious about where this might take us. I am taking a solutions -focused approach (Booton, 2020) but also paving the way for “uncomfortable and necessary conversations” (Roche, 2018, p7). Whilst doing this I am raising the profile of pupils in generations to come.
- holding myself accountable by placing this on the agenda of the supervision group I participate in for my own professional development.
- engaging in dialogue with other coaches and education professionals. This thinkpiece is a small step in doing this. I would be keen to talk with others as we collectively navigate this journey. For those interested, the Climate Coaches Alliance (<https://www.climatecoachingalliance.org/>) has resources and events that can help facilitate conversations about this important issue.

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Contracting in Education: A Vital Component of Coaching, Mentoring and Facilitation of Professional Learning

A think piece working paper by Margaret Barr

As Andrea Stringer observed in her recent practice insight working paper on coaching as a reciprocal learning partnership (2020, p. 47), the GROWTH conversational framework (Campbell, 2016) begins with “Relationships – Building the Trust”. In the same issue, Hannah Wilson and David Gumbrell emphasised the importance of building trust at the beginning of a mentoring relationship, commenting “In any mentoring or coaching relationship, it is important to contract how this relationship is established, maintained and nourished” (2020, p. 115).

I believe it would be helpful for those of us in education who are planning coaching or mentoring, to talk even more about contracting as a crucial component. In fact, any helping intervention, including the facilitation of professional learning programmes, can benefit from a considered approach to contracting as a key element of the intervention, building trust. In his reflective blog post about coaching in school, Chris Munro (2015) calls this “clarifying the terms of engagement”.

It appears there is no agreed approach to contracting, and I would like to offer this broad definition:

Contracting in coaching, mentoring or facilitation is a means of supporting ownership and learning. The all-stakeholder contracting discussion that prefaces the intervention aims to secure a shared understanding of what is going to happen and the purpose.

Although the word “contracting” might imply a level of written formality, contracting can also be verbal, and sometimes it can be implicit. In this think piece I reflect on the importance of contracting, and offer some examples of what it might look like in various contexts.

Why Is Contracting Important?

Contracting is an opportunity for the coach, mentor or facilitator to demonstrate openness and transparency to build trust and psychological safety. The risk of misunderstandings and subsequent difficulties

can be reduced if expectations and arrangements are clarified and agreed in advance. Indeed, coaching situations that are taken to supervision can sometimes be traceable to the contracting stage (Turner & Passmore, 2019, p. 14). Therefore, whether the contracting is a simple verbal discussion or a more complex process, I believe it is a worth doing scrupulously, even if some of the stakeholders want to cut this stage short and get started. It may also be necessary to recontract throughout the engagement, as matters evolve.

What Could Contracting Look Like in Various Contexts?

There are several contexts with varying levels of formality where contracting supports ownership and learning, and three possible contexts are given here – first, how we might contract for informal or routine conversations; second, contracting in planned coaching or mentoring sessions; and third, multi-stakeholder contracting which also involves one or more third-parties.

Informal or routine conversations with a coaching approach. These might be the “Got-a-Minute” conversations of Quadrant 2 of John Campbell and Jason Pascoe’s “Leadership Conversations Map” (2020, pp. 44–45) where the leader may adopt a coaching approach in response to a request to

explore a topic. Or they might be peer conversations where colleagues support one another using a coaching approach. Or staff in conversation with school students. Meetings with parents, whether short-notice or scheduled, could routinely use a coaching approach. When explicit contracting at the time is not practical, there can still be an implicit contract – a shared understanding that in this school, with this leader, we support one another by listening really well and asking helpful questions to find solutions, rather than automatically offering advice. This implicit understanding can occur if the approach has already been discussed openly. For example, the leader can share and model their values with school staff, school students, parents/carers and other members of the school community, and create time and space for everyone to explore how they can support one another.

Planned and scheduled coaching or mentoring conversations with an individual or a team. These conversations could be anywhere on the “Continuum of Professional Learning Conversations” described in Chris Munro’s think piece working paper (2020, p. 40) – facilitative coaching, dialogic coaching, or mentoring. One example could be a leader holding regular mentoring conversations with student teachers or newly-qualified teachers; or coaching sessions with individual staff to develop classroom practice or leadership

practice. Peers could coach one another to support professional development. School students could be coached by an older student or a member of staff. Team meetings to make decisions (including those with partner agencies) may employ a combination of “coach-like” questions and turn-taking. Contracting can take place in advance of the series of sessions, and/or at the beginning of the first meeting, with a brief contracting check-in at the beginning of subsequent meetings. Below I offer some possible matters to discuss (not scripted, and not linear). Which of these could be dealt with in advance (eg a week before), and which need to be revisited at the beginning of each meeting and subsequent reviews?

- Welcome. Confirm how much time we have for the session.
- Clarify roles. (As a coach, I often begin with “My role is to help you think.”)
- If coaching, check coachee’s understanding of coaching as a focused conversation to help them visualise what they would like to achieve and decide on the actions they will take.
- If using a specific conversational framework (eg GROWTH), clarify how the structure and questions provide support and challenge, and check for agreement to use that framework.
- Will this be a mentoring conversation where advice and guidance will be given? To what extent? Or will it be a

dialogic coaching conversation (eg instructional coaching – Knight, 2018) where opinions and experience will be shared as required? Or will the offer of information be made only if essential (eg if the coachee is completely “stuck”, or missing essential information)?

- Discuss confidentiality. To what extent are this conversation and any notes taken confidential? Obvious exclusions are concerns over welfare and safety, or professional misconduct. What information will remain absolutely confidential, and what can have only limited confidentiality? This may depend on whether the coach is a leader-as-coach or a coach external to the school.
- Discuss note-taking – who is responsible? In this conversation, will the coach/mentor be listening so attentively that they will take few notes, and will invite the coachee/mentee to take notes as needed and/or at the end? Or will the coach or mentor take notes and give them to the coachee? Or is this a formal meeting where recorded notes are essential, and both parties take time out periodically and at the end to agree what notes are written? Or another arrangement? Whatever happens with note-taking, there needs to be a shared understanding and agreement.

- If it is a virtual meeting using technology, acknowledge the challenges. Edmondson and Daley (2020) offer some helpful advice about fostering psychological safety in virtual meetings.
- Check whether the coachee, mentee or other person has any questions, or would like to discuss anything more before beginning.

Planned programme of sessions arranged with a third party, eg the school. In any programme of coaching, mentoring or professional learning activities it is helpful to know how it fits into the bigger picture of the system, eg the department, school or service, and beyond. When a planned programme of sessions (or even one session) is initiated by someone other than the coach and coachee, the contracting is extended to other stakeholders, and all parties discuss and sign a written coaching agreement, with the initial draft prepared by the coach. In addition to session detail, eg number, length, timescale, and cancellation arrangements, the discussion and agreement can helpfully cover:

- Expectations that all parties have of one another, eg the role of the coach/mentor/facilitator, the level and type of challenge, how they will work together.
- The code of ethics adhered to, eg The Global Code of Ethics

<https://www.emccglobal.org/quality/ethics/>

including professional indemnity insurance.

- Jointly agreed broad outcomes for the coaching/mentoring/facilitation, how they will be measured, and how any “reporting back” to the organisation will happen (eg by coachee alone, or jointly by coach and coachee, or another multi-stakeholder discussion, or different arrangement).

Turner and Hawkins’ (2016) study of multi-stakeholder contracting in executive and business coaching found that coaches, coachees and organisations agreed that multi-stakeholder contracting is appropriate when the coaching is for the coachee’s development, the organisation is paying, the coachee agrees, and the coaching goals lend themselves to evaluation and review (pp. 57-58). The coaches were also invited to offer a top tip for successful stakeholder contracting, and their recommendations included: clarity of expectations, honesty, transparency, impartiality, flexibility, creating a safe space, jointly setting outcomes, and the coach understanding what lies at the root of the coaching engagement (pp. 60-61). While this last context uses coaching as an example, I believe it also has relevance for mentoring, and for facilitation of professional learning events and programmes.

An Invitation to Reflect

- What are your reactions to this think piece (whether you agree with it or not)? What would be a useful next step in discussions about contracting in coaching, mentoring and facilitation?
- What steps (if any) could you take to continue making sure that any coaching, mentoring or facilitation of professional learning within your responsibility begins with everyone having a shared understanding of, and agreement on, the purpose and what is going to happen?

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Thinking it through: how can we understand representation, distribution of power and whiteness in educational leadership?

A research proposal working paper by Claire Stewart-Hall

This working paper is based on the ideas underpinning an application for doctoral study. It demonstrates how I am thinking through the research question and approach. A core feature is group coaching as a method.

Overview

I plan to research the construction of whiteness and its impact on leadership of Bristol schools; specifically ways that the social and professional construction of whiteness shapes senior leadership teams' enactment of roles. I will take a critical research perspective and seek to develop processes for creating discourse about whiteness. This will be achieved using group coaching as a methodological approach to developing reflective practice with school senior leadership teams. It will use a critical participatory action research (PAR) approach with majority white senior teams in three Bristol schools using Habermas' staged ideology critique (1976) to gather data and change 'we' perspectives (Habermas, 1976) about the role whiteness plays in leadership cognizance and agency.

My position and rationale

I am a former Head Teacher in Bristol where, in 2017, 38% of primary and 34% of secondary students came from 'minority ethnic groups'; and 91% of teachers identify as white British (DfE 2019). Structural racism cannot change until whiteness is examined by white people themselves (Baldwin, 1963) therefore it is necessary to create processes for becoming cognizant of whiteness with educators of children of any racial background in order for wider society to become equitable. Without processes to develop discourse about whiteness, the teaching profession lacks and ignores fundamental knowledge and professional learning about race and its impact thereby institutions continue to enact and perpetuate dominant colonial ideologies causing damaging harm. I anticipate this lack contributes to systemic frameworks preventing more black and brown teachers accessing teaching and positions in school leadership teams.

Proposed research question:

Can group coaching provide processes to develop discourse around whiteness in state primary and secondary schools in Bristol?

Epistemology and ontology

This research uses transformative paradigms (Habermas, 1972) to question whiteness and its relationship to leadership teams, and subsequently its impact on role enactment. Cohen (2018) states transformative paradigms in critical educational research are seeking not merely to understand situations and phenomena, but to change them.

My race positionality evolved through working in the same multicultural school for a long period of fifteen years. Experiences I had in school led me to question powers afforded to me because of my whiteness whilst scrutinising how experiences of institutional racism by students and staff take various forms. My experiences as part of the hegemony meant that unless I sustained consciousness of the privilege of whiteness, I was at risk of overlooking my own assumptions as neutral. Interconnected assumptions were made about my whiteness, social class, my record of discretion about my sexuality, accent and qualifications, which meant I benefited from being advantaged, as described by Jackman (1994) and Lewis (2004), resulting in becoming a principal when I was thirty nine years old. Despite the agency I had as a Principal, I was still unequipped to create sustained systemic change, despite seeing social injustice.

Although more ethnically diverse than my home town, I worked and lived in an area

similar on the indices of deprivation to the one in which I grew up, which gave me a familiar kinship with the local community and I recognised an institutional habitus and narratives of low expectations associated with poor children (Reay, 2017). However, contesting class assumptions and stereotypes was not enough to challenge or expose the continued disadvantage that children and staff of colour experienced structurally, nor were there specific safeguards for them or me to address the injustice they experienced. These experiences led me to recognise considerable gaps in both institutions and in professional training at teacher and leadership levels.

Methods

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue triangulation, using mixed methods and theory increases validity. To capture different sources of perspectives on whiteness in Bristol, this research will collect data from three different school senior leadership teams.

Group coaching will be used both as a methodological approach and as a standardised method of collecting data from senior leadership teams analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The aim is to support leadership teams to develop discourse about whiteness and the enactment of roles whilst attempting to transform perspectives. This will happen

through four group coaching sessions with teams in primary or secondary state schools over a period of a year. This allows for prolonged engagement which Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue increases credibility and validity, leaving reflective space for participants and for the researcher to identify inaccurate data. Respondent validation of findings will further increase trustworthiness of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Methodology

Parker, Villenas and Deyhle (1999) assert Critical Race Theory (CRT) is both a theoretical approach and provides methodological tools for dismantling ideas of fairness and the appearance of ideological positions of neutrality thereby providing 'counter-truths.' (Parker, 1999:33). Matias and Newlove (2017) and Friere (1993) contest the reassertion of empiricism as the dominant methodological discourse-practice and suggest using critical theoretical research methods in order to avoid replicating systems of oppression through the research process. Co-creating data with participants and facilitating coaching spaces to reflect on the aims of the research are methodological processes used to avoid existing race and class inequalities (Gillborn, 2014). Deficit research methodologies assume participants in systems that structurally disempower them hold institutional agency and responsibility to disrupt hegemonic practice. Therefore Parker

et al (1999) underline the importance of moving the researcher's gaze from deficit views to critical views of inequitable practice that limits people's life opportunities thus this study has been conceived to avoid any deficit methodological dynamic.

The approach used is described as Praxis and Emancipation in the Southern Tradition (Cordeiro et al, 2017) with the central aim to raise consciousness and explore *legitimacy* and *validity* of the role of whiteness in the workforce with staff who can directly impact upon it. Through creating a series of communicative spaces (Habermas, 1987;1984) involving senior leadership teams, group-coaching will be used to explore their *communicative action* (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014) in relation to the impact whiteness has in school cultures. Locke, Alcorn and O'neill (2013) suggest flattening hierarchical structures is central to reduce instances of power struggles and increase transparency. Coaching is a method supporting a critical research epistemology and using Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) as defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The aim is to create a social, self-reflective enquiry in which to use collective methods to support participants to improve the justice of educational practices of their own situations and raise consciousness through processes used. Similarly, Habermas (1972) argues ideological practice is transformed through critical reflection. The

third of his knowledge-constitutive interests is ideology critique, summarised as the 'suppression of generalizable interests' (Habermas, 1976, p. 113) to uncover ways to reveal how participants are perpetuating systems which lead to disempowerment (Geuss, 1981). Habermas' ideology critique is staged:

Stage 1 – a description of the existing situation

Stage 2 – a presentation of the reasons that brought the existing situation to the form it takes

Stage 3 – an agenda for altering the situation – a transformation

Stage 4 – a evaluation of the achievement of the situation in practice

(Habermas, 1972, p.230)

This methodological approach has been likened to psychoanalysis, bringing the unknown factors of a situation to the fore in order for participants to see clearly with such exposure resulting in transformation (Cohen et al, 2018).

Group-coaching, as described by Clutterbuck (2007), creates bounded, transformative spaces for discourse and can result in organisational and self-efficacy in role enactment (Grant, Curtayne, and Burton, 2009). Used as a methodological approach by

Delasson, Just, Stegeager and Malling (2016), group-coaching has been found to support professional development, help structure conversations, share goals and purpose. Wagerman, Nunes, Burruss and Hackman (2008) also find group-coaching with new teams to be most effective when they are motivated to increase knowledge and skills. Group-coaching in more established teams has been found to support development of interpersonal dynamics, collective emotional intelligence building and managing key processes (Clutterbuck 2018).

Transformative Coaching theory combines Knowles (1978) theory of andragogy, Mezirow's (2000) research that critical reflection triggers transformative learning through shifting meaning perspectives, together with Kolb's (1984) findings that learning is an experiential process. In combination with Habermas' (1976) staged Ideology Critique, group-coaching could offer processes for discussing whiteness with senior teams to rethink and evolve their practice. Therefore, group-coaching will be used as a process through which to 'seek an agenda' for transformation (stage 3, Habermas 1976, p.230). The role of the coach/researcher will be ethnographic (Bryman, 2004) in a participant-as-observer role defined by Gold (1958) observing participants during the process overtly.

An ethical and methodological consideration is emotionality described by Ahmed (2004) and Matias and Mackey (2015), who prepared school teachers for anti-racist practice by using staged reflective processes. They propose emotions identified with whiteness are: ‘*pity, guilt, anger, defensiveness*’ emphasising emotional preparation with participants to ‘share the burden of race.’ (p.36). Therefore, in this study, a stage will be dedicated to emotional preparation. Localized contextual information and counter stories (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) will also be used to form a key stage in supporting participants’ cognizance. As a qualified Level 7 coach with the Institute of Leadership and Management, I work to the Global Code of Ethics (GMCA, 2018) ensuring I contract and boundary coaching spaces needed for participants to feel safe and secure in sharing challenges.

Habermas (1987) rejects master narratives championing ways communicative spaces enable people in public spheres to explore issues to transform social life. He argues it is discourse, not whole systems, situated when and where problems occur, that creates meaning, collective endeavour and shared consciousness. Therefore the critical praxis of

this study suggests external validity is not as relevant as internal validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) but means observer bias will need to be mitigated.

By group-coaching different people with institutional agency to reflect on their whiteness, I will act as a participant-as-observer collecting data on responses, observe how groups share perspectives and identify the impact the process of coaching had on role enactment and subsequent changes.

Research intentions

It is hoped that this research will:

- create recommendations for schools to learn from how group coaching as a process affected discourse about whiteness;
- provide professional case studies for the profession about relationships between whiteness and leadership;
- influence leaders in participant schools to develop reflection and agency about factors connecting the sustained lack of racial diversity in leadership and the role whiteness plays in schools in Bristol.

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Preparing a Roundtable for the Innovative Teacher Project: A Learning Process of Individual and Group Construction

A practice insight working paper by Beatrice Balfour & Susan Lyon

Introduction

The Innovative Teacher Project (ITP), based in San Francisco, California, provides professional development inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to educators in early childhood. Since its inception, 1994, the project's goal is to create opportunities for dialogue and exchange between teachers, directors and schools based on the principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach. The project offers seminars, director meetings, events and roundtables in the Bay area. A network of schools participate in the project and a community has been established inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach of schools interested in quality early childhood education. The Reggio Emilia Approach is an internationally renowned high quality educational approach that was born in Italy after the second world war. Schools that are part of the established ITP network have an opportunity to host a roundtable during the school year, which includes these elements: a tour of the school, an opportunity for the attendees to talk with teachers of that school, presentations of the school's current work based on the Reggio Emilia principles and discussion time among participants with the school's staff.

The Roundtable is a professional development opportunity for both the attendees and the staff that hosts the Roundtable. It is aimed at building understanding and awareness of the meaning and methods of high quality early childhood education. The focus for the ITP roundtables for the school year 2019-2020 came from Indications, Preschools and Infant -Toddler Centres of the Municipality of Reggio Children. These are principles of the educational project in Reggio Emilia. For the 2019-2020 school year, the ITP steering committee chose the following principle (principle 2.5) to focus on for the roundtable series: "learning as a process of individual and group construction."

For the 2019-2020 school year, a Roundtable was scheduled at Gan Shalom Preschool for April 26, 2020. In the Fall 2019 a director from the Aquatic Park School, Anne Bauer, and the founder, director of the ITP, Susan Lyon, met with the director of Gan Shalom, Beatrice Balfour, to begin the discussion and professional development (within Gan Shalom) for the roundtable scheduled in April. The director of Gan Shalom preschool met

and worked side-by-side with the teachers of Gan Shalom in preparing the Roundtable presentation. In this way, the professional development began, and took place, with the director and teachers, and the ITP leadership, in advance of the roundtable. In this article, we show the process of professional development for the Gan Shalom director and staff in anticipation of the roundtable at Gan Shalom Preschool. Specifically, we discuss how the preparation for the Roundtable for Gan Shalom became a catalyst for the Gan Shalom staff to think together about, create, and bring to life, the role and place that a newly created art studio had for the school.

A description of the professional development process

I, Beatrice Balfour, had been working and directing Gan Shalom preschool for over a year 2 when Gan Shalom was invited to participate in the ITP Roundtable. I joined ITP with Gan Shalom soon after I started directing Gan Shalom. Also, soon after I started at Gan Shalom, I created an art studio in the school. The art studio became the focus of the ITP Roundtable.

When I started at Gan Shalom, I noticed that in the school, there was a spacious and beautiful, yet unused room. I decided, in collaboration with the leadership team of Gan Shalom and with the teachers, to transform it into an art studio - a core environment for the

Reggio Emilia Approach. We worked with an architect in Reggio Emilia that collaborated in the design of many Reggio Emilia inspired preschools around the world, Sebastiano Longaretti, to design the space. When ITP invited Gan Shalom to host the Roundtable, we had been using the art studio for over a year.

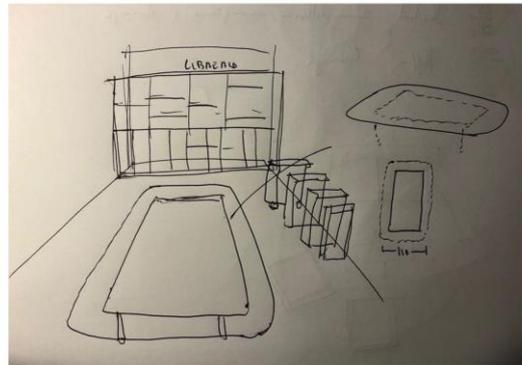


Figure 1: One of our early drawings from the process of restructuring the room at Gan Shalom and turning it into an art studio, or atelier.

My vision for the art studio, or atelier, was that of being the heart of the school, where the principles of Reggio Emilia teaching and learning come alive and that of a space that inspires teaching and learning according to those principles across the schools. However, we had not yet developed a collective vision for this space in the school. The ITP Roundtable became a great opportunity for professional development around this project. I decided to proceed by choosing one teacher to start to work on the ITP Roundtable presentation preparation with me, as a pedagogical pair, in the art studio with the children. I felt comfortable in starting small - having conversations, collaborating and co-constructing knowledge together as a pair. The teacher I chose to work with, Molly

Greenberg, was in her third year as an early childhood educator. As Molly and I developed a project, we got more teachers involved.

Stepping in the art studio with Molly was the first of a number of steps in the professional development process sparked by ITP. In the rest of this session I describe each of these steps, starting by (a) describing my collaboration with Molly in the art studio and (b) describing our collaboration in the preparation of the actual presentation.



Figure 2: The Art Studio, or Atelier, at Gan Shalom Preschool.

a. Co-teaching & the Pedagogical Pair - The value of collaboration and constructivist teaching

Working as a pedagogical pair with Molly meant that I was working side by side with her in the art studio, reflecting together outside of the studio, as well as preparing and learning together. Molly and I started spending two hours a week in the art studio together for the next couple of months. Together we also came up with a research question inspired by the theme of the ITP Roundtable for our work in the art

studio, ‘how do children learn individually and as a group in the art studio?’

In the art studio, we worked in small groups with the children and both of us, Molly and I, were often present. At times, other teachers joined us. At least one of us would be taking notes in the form of a video recording, written notes or pictures. We spoke with the children as a group or we worked side by side facilitating children’s learning and interactions. We debriefed before and after each art studio session in my office, discussing emergent issues and how we wanted to ‘provoke’ the children next. In the process, it became clear that taking notes during the workshops with the children and revisiting them in our meetings was a good way for us to move forward in the process. Often we noticed something new by looking back at children’s words, and we were able to highlight new connections or places of growth for the both of us or the children.

During the meetings with Molly, I was able to highlight the connections between the principles of Reggio Emilia and or work in the art studio. We quickly found the combination of our knowledge was beneficial, as Molly was not experienced in the Reggio Emilia approach. Molly’s questions and inquiries encouraged me to think deeper, and I was able to guide Molly to various readings, articles, or publications. As part of that

process, I also encouraged her and the other teachers to attend ITP events and Reggio Emilia inspired workshops in the San Francisco Bay Area. I would go with them, and then debrief with them after the meetings answering and going in depth about any questions. Our exchanges were strengthened by the teacher's own interests. Molly and I were exploring the principles of Reggio Emilia as they became relevant to our work in the studio with the children. In turn, when we would go back into the classroom with the children, we would bring our expanded knowledge and interests as a teaching pair to the children, and then move on from there. We continued with this way of working, this 'cycle of inquiry and teaching', for over a month.

As Molly and I were working on this project, we invited other teachers to participate in some of our sessions. The other teachers in the school were developing a curiosity about the art studio and what was happening in it as the children were talking about it. I started to work and collaborate with other teachers who expressed interest in extending the project I was doing with Molly in their own classroom, starting to also meet, discuss and include them in the process and project that Molly and I were leading in the studio. Molly also brought the project slowly in her own classroom brainstorming with the other teachers ideas of how to create more of a

connection between the art studio and the work in the classroom. The enthusiasm around this project was starting to become contagious and the art studio was starting to have a more central role in our discussions and work as a staff as a result of this work. I participated and facilitated meetings with the staff where teachers discussed how to integrate the project of the art studio in their own classroom work, and how vice versa their own classroom work could contribute to the project of the art studio. I observed by then that the art studio had become more of a focus among the staff!

2. Theory and practice: the articulation of a project



Figure 3: Molly and I at a conference, presenting our work with the children.

After a month, Molly and I had a lot of material that we collected from our sessions with the children in the art studio, and we were getting closer to the ITP Roundtable. Over that month, I had been in regular contact with the ITP leadership, and had shared with them some of the materials that Molly and I had been collecting. Doing so was

helpful to ensure that the work was regularly categorized and organized. Once Molly and I needed to access the data, it was all ready for our use!

At that point, I met with Anne Bauer, and spoke with her about a conference that was taking place in the area before ITP and to which Gan Shalom always participated as an audience member. I also shared with Anne that the previous year I presented at the conference. There with Anne, the idea emerged that Molly and I could present together the work we had done in the art studio as a test for the ITP Roundtable at this other conference. I got excited by that, Molly agreed, and I shared my idea with some colleagues that participated in the planning of the conference. They encouraged me to put in an abstract, we got accepted and started to get ready for the presentation.

I organized a mock presentation for Molly and I to practice and present together in front of a smaller audience before the large conference. I invited members of the Gan Shalom community to attend the presentation; this included parents, teachers, and other community members. A large part of professional development was involved in the phase of preparation for the test presentation and for the presentation of the conference. Molly and I spent three weeks meeting twice a week, reviewing our notes

and pictures that we had carefully catalogued. We discussed what we had learned in that process about the children and the numerous contributions that art brought to the children. We talked about how the children worked individually and together in the studio, and how inclusion and participation took place in that space and what our role had been as facilitators in that space. That's where I really started seeing that we were constructing knowledge together, that we were in that process creating and shaping together our interpretation of what had happened in the art studio for Gan Shalom during our work with the children.

Our relationship as a pedagogical pair was strengthened in this process. We were collaborating, rather than me simply explaining to Molly what to do in the art studio and how to use it. It was not a top-down approach to the art studio anymore. We were generating together the idea of what the art studio meant to us and to the school community en large. The value of the art studio started becoming clear and visible to us, and that value was brought about and made clear to us by the real words, theories and experiences of the children that we had carefully documented throughout the process and that we were reviewing and interpreting together.

By the time our presentation was ready and we were going to present it, I came to realize that what we had already accomplished was of value and the take-away. The presentation itself was only the icing on the cake for us, as so much learning and professional development had already taken place. Presenting was important, but the process of preparing for the presentation was equally important. The preparation time allowed for a lot of learning and growth for both Molly and I. As Veia Vecchi, founding atelierista (or art teacher) in Reggio Emilia says, “the importance and care given to the entire procedure, the whole process, leading to the final product is one of the elements which” distinguishes the Reggio Emilia pedagogy from others (Vecchi, p. 58.) Much in line with Vecchi and with the Reggio Emilia pedagogy, by the time we were ready for the presentation, it had become clear to me that ITP was about the entire procedure, ‘the whole process’ of preparing and delivering the presentation, and not just about the presentation day itself.

Due to the outbreak of COVID 19, unfortunately the ITP Roundtable scheduled for Gan Shalom did not take place. Though of course I was sorry for the missed opportunity of hosting the Roundtable, in light of what I described above, I knew that a large part of the richness of the learning that the ITP Roundtable could ignite for me as a director

and for the teachers at Gan Shalom had already happened. According to the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the school should be a place where we “keep alive the wonder and excitement in learning procedures” (Vecchi, Art and Creativity in Reggio Emilia, p. 30). By getting involved in the ITP project and leading the process of preparation of the ITP Roundtable, I developed a new joy and enthusiasm for my work. I started to really understand my role as a director was not just as that of an administrator but also as that of a ‘pedagogista’ or pedagogy director. I realized that it was necessary for me to step in the classroom with the staff, developing projects with teachers and co-constructing with them knowledge to develop our understanding and vision for the art studio. In turn, by engaging our school in the ITP project, I brought renewed joy and enthusiasm both to the staff - by offering them opportunities for growth and development - and to the children - by ‘provoking’ them with new learning opportunities in the art studio.

Conclusions

Professional development in education does not only exist in conferences, seminars and workshops outside of the school. Professional development can occur daily in the life of the school with teachers and children.

Professional development created inside the

school through weekly meetings with teachers can deepen the level of learning between teachers and children as described by the director at Gan Shalom.

In Reggio Emilia, Italy, the school is seen as an educational project. Within the schools there are pairs of teachers and a pedagoga for each school. "The role of the pedagoga in Reggio Emilia works to promote within each self and among teachers an attitude of "learning to learn" (as John Dewey called it) an openness to change, and a willingness to discuss opposing points of view. We work to favor discussion. People offer their ideas, and likewise should also take advantage of the ideas of others. The value of such a strategy comes gradually to be appreciated, even if it takes time. The pedagoga becomes part of the overall educational project of each institution and facilitates dialogue and reflection about general and specific educational issues." (Edwards et al., pg. 130)

At Gan Shalom the creation of a pedagogical pair between the teacher and director began an important strategy for the focus on the art studio. Their work together and the sharing of the ongoing work in the art studio created an environment at the school of excitement and growth and an attitude of "learning to learn." In developing this pedagogical relationship, both the director and the teacher were learners in the process and became better

teachers in the process. Molly makes this clear in her testimony of working on this project. Molly states:

"It was a powerful and profound experience to work alongside Beatrice for this project. Our relationship before had been that of school director and classroom teacher, but throughout the project it shifted to that as a pedagogical pair and co-creators. I had very little exposure to the Reggio Emilia pedagogy before meeting Beatrice. Beatrice exposed the teaching staff to Reggio Emilia concepts during staff development, but there was little time for in depth learning. I was eager to work with Beatrice when she invited me to join her for this project for a few reasons, but the two most overwhelming reasons were that I wanted to learn more about Reggio Emilia and wanted to work closer with Beatrice. As I was still newly exposed to Reggio Emilia, I had many questions. I also experienced some frustration at times, as I had to actively work to shift my brain from focussing on the end product, to focusing on the process. Beatrice was always patient in explaining new concepts to me, and was always open to hearing and taking on my ideas. I realized that I was getting to know Beatrice in a new light and by learning more about her background and passion for Reggio Emilia, I got to know her better. It was also inspiring to watch the children doing the length of the project. I saw how they got to know the clay material

better, use new language, and work together as peers in a way that I hadn't seen before. It also showed me that there is time and space within project based learning for providing children with learning opportunities typically found in more explicit instruction classrooms. I had been skeptical of the process, and I still do believe in explicit instruction, but it definitely opened my eyes to the value of this sort of learning. Beatrice and I worked well together, and were easily able to find a balance for our individual ideas and goals. Working together we were able to provide the children a new learning experience, teach them numerous learning goals and opportunities (math, physics, language), and physical development (fine and gross motor skills). When we first started the project we asked ourselves "how do children learn individually and as a group in the art studio?", and how would the art studio affect the children's learning? By the end, I realized that the end result answered a different question - how do we (Beatrice and I) build a partnership not based on that of director to teacher, but that of partner-to-partner, and how does that partnership work to engage children? I found this to be one of the most interesting and rewarding professional-development experiences as a teacher thus far in my teaching career, and I feel so happy and lucky that I was able to partake in it with Beatrice."

In closing, as a 'provocation', we share some generative questions that emerged in our writing process as reflections about the role of the director and professional development in schools. We hope that such questions can generate dialogue and collaboration within your school context.

Looking at the role of the director in preschool in relationship to pedagogy of a school. 1. How does pedagogy relate to leadership? What's the difference between a manager and a leader? 2. Who creates the 'pedagogical map' or the pedagogical/curricular plan in your school? 3. Is it possible for a preschool director to be also a pedagogy director, or pedagoga, in your school? If yes, what would this look like? Or, is this a role that needs to be honored by another person in your school?

Looking at the role of the ITP roundtable as professional development 1. What has been an emerging project in your school community? 2. How can engaging in a roundtable be a catalyst for dialogue and exchange in your school about this project? 3. In what ways can you use the roundtable as a way of looking at the process of teaching and learning in ongoing professional development within your school context?

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More info at

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The Academic Professional Apprenticeship: An Authentic Model of Experiential Learning

A practice insight working paper Hardeep K Basra

This practice insight paper focuses on the use of apprenticeships as a form of development for teachers in higher education (HE). It builds on the paper of Kevin Merry, which examined the strength of the experiential learning to support the developmental needs of those who teach in higher education (Merry, 2019). Whilst endorsing this position, in contrast, this piece moves away from the 70-20-10 developmental model (Lombardo and Eching, 2006) and examines apprenticeships as a model of experiential learning. In particular, this paper reflects on the introduction of the [Academic Professional Apprenticeship](#) (APA) at DeMontfort University (DMU). This Level 7 APA has been designed to develop early career academics working in higher education settings, along either the teaching specialist route or the research specialist route.

Why Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are a long-standing form of worked based learning, where the concept of 'learning by doing' or 'learning through experience' is integral. They provide the most authentic of contexts, where situated learning allows for knowledge and skills to be learnt in the same place where they will be used (Lave and Wenger, 2001). In fact, Lave and Wenger

(2001) themselves argue that learning should take place through an apprenticeship model. However, learning through experience is not new and it has been long recognised experiential learning is a central feature of learning and development in humans (Dewey 1938, Paiget 1950, Kolb, 1984). It has also been widely recognised that HE teachers will accrue much of their knowledge and skills to undertake the job by learning through the job (Knight, Taite and Yorke, 2006). But what is new is the delivery of experiential learning through a structured model of an apprenticeship for the development of HE teachers. With the introduction of the apprenticeship levy there was growing pressure on HEIs to shift and reformulate this learning through the experiential apprenticeship model. So, at DMU, along with many in the sector, we developed a new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and strategically aligned this to the APA teaching specialist route.

In this paper I argue there are distinct benefits to developing HE teachers through apprenticeships, which significantly enhance the benefits of experiential learning. These include 1) structured reflection 2) mentoring and guided learning and 3) socially learning.

Structured Reflection

Kolb's model of experiential learning theory (ELT) is considered the most influential. Kolb's model describes learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (1984). The model proposes four stages; 1) concrete experience, 2) reflective observation, 3) abstract conceptualisation and 4) active experimentation and unlike the other approaches to ELT, Kolb places significant importance on reflection. It is through this reflective process where learners are able to make sense of their experience or extract meaning from the experience. Schön (1983), who specifically looked the development of teachers also emphasised the importance of critical reflection to professional development. It is this learning through reflection, which I advocate, is a particular strength of the APA, where continuous structured reflection is a requirement throughout.

The reflection required through the APA is similar to Brookfield's model of reflection (Brookfield, 1995). Apprentices are encouraged to reflect from their own perspective (autobiographical lens); they are also encouraged to seek feedback on their teaching activities and approaches from both students and peers (student and colleague views) and lastly, they are asked to enhance and/or consolidate their practice based on

theory (the theoretical lens). This reflection is specifically facilitated in at least three ways on the APA;

- through the use of formative and summative assessment tasks
- the requirement to evidence learning through a reflective e-portfolio
- through structured quarterly progress meetings between apprentices, programme tutor and line manager or workplace mentor.

The curriculum, teaching activities and assessments of the APA have all been designed to maximise opportunities for critical reflection and when this is coupled with the operational requirements of an apprenticeship, Kolb's continuous cycle of reflection can be fully realised. Learning from reflection leads to enhanced learning and further development, which can inevitably lead to better performance and effectiveness of HE teachers. Apprentices also benefit from being given protected time to engage in this reflective process.

Mentoring and Guided Learning

However, in order for this reflection to be meaningful learners need to be able to make sense of their experience otherwise the educational value of such experiences will be lost. Kolb, Schon (1983) and Mezirow (2000) argue for transformation to occur (through reflection) learners should be supported by someone more experienced, such support is

formally embedded within apprenticeships. It is the implementation of this support structure, which I argue is another key strength of developing HE teachers through apprenticeships.

All apprentices are allocated a workplace mentor, someone more experienced from their subject disciplines. These mentors are tasked with supporting the individual learning and development needs of apprentices and they can do this through the adoption of a more personalised approach. In addition to this, workplace mentors are best placed to draw on the specific nuances associated with the pedagogies of their subject discipline, which provides important contextualisation of application between theory and practice. By sharing their lived experiences mentors prompt apprentices to reflect on concrete experiences and engage in conceptualisation/action planning and active experimentation. This process is further reinforced through the quarterly reviews, which include line managers and/or mentors.

Apprentices are also allocated personal tutors from the programme team. However, I argue unlike the conventional role of personal tutor's, which focus on issues such as welfare/pastoral support, academic progress and transition, personal tutors on the APA act more like 'coaches'. The APA apprentices are themselves DMU staff, therefore they do not require the standard offering of personal

tutors. The programme tutors, as academics themselves, are instead able to foster a professional relationship based on a shared understanding of the role of an academic. Tutors (coach) help apprentices to unlock their potential so they can realise their goals and ambitions in being effective HE teachers. They encourage deeper thought and reflection through appropriate questioning and listening and help apprentices to make links between the theory and practice. Whilst, at the same time tutors help apprentices to better manage the challenges and obstacles they face in the workplace, specially balancing workload and study. By offering a supportive, positive approach tutors provide apprentices guidance on how they can manage their competing interests so they can get the most out of their learning experience.

Social Learning

Another key feature of apprenticeships is learning from and with others. This approach suggests learning is more than individual, that in fact it is a collective process. The social nature of apprenticeship learning is fundamental to experiential learning. Yardley, et al (2012) argue learning can be both individual and collective. They argue individuals may construct different understandings from experience but these are still considered to derive from multidirectional influences between them and others. This is also true of APA apprentices, who are actively

given opportunities to socially construct their knowledge. Classroom teaching is focused on active and peer learning and fully supported by expert practitioners and in the workplace the allocation of mentors and the involvement of line managers ensures practice continues to be socially constructed. Consequently, this collaborative learning approach provides learners with 'scaffolding' to evolve their knowledge and skills, beyond their initial individual understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). With this in mind, apprenticeships can be seen as a community of practice where through regular interactions with those who have a shared domain of interest can one learn from each other, their experiences and resources (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Challenges to the experiential learning

Despite, the pedagogic advantages associated with apprenticeships there are environmental and structural constraints, which can impede the quality of experiential learning from taking place. At DMU, apprenticeships are relatively new and even more so in the area of supporting the development of their own staff. This poses challenges, as the operational requirements of apprenticeships is unfamiliar to many of those who are involved, from line managers, mentors and even apprentices themselves. Therefore, despite apprenticeships offering optimal opportunities to benefit from experiential

learning until there is an organisational behavioural shift to fully understand and support the requirements of apprenticeships some of the benefits will be compromised. For example, although apprentices are given protected time to undertake the APA this is not realised in the same manner associated with other apprenticeships, as such APA apprentices are rarely given the equivalent to one study day a week. For APA apprentices, there are complexities in how the protected time is allocated and this is due to nature of workload planning models used for academics.

Furthermore, unlike most apprentices who are given low risk easily achievable tasks, whose competencies are developed over time, many APA apprentices are not treated as novices, and often find they are thrust upon the norms of teaching like many of their more experienced peers. APA apprentices also find they have a plethora of competing workload priorities resulting in them compromising their learning in order to get their job done. The demands on HE teachers are vast and challenging and these have been exacerbated further in recent times due to Covid-19.

Conclusions

This practice insight working paper has further endorsed the value of experiential learning as the preferred model for development of HE teachers. Moreover, it has specifically shown

the value an apprenticeship can bring to realising the benefits of experiential learning. Through a combination of structured reflection, mentorship/guided practice and social learning, HE teachers can take advantage of this more rigorous form of development, where multiple stakeholders play a critical role. The focus on collaborative learning and collective responsibility, whilst also focusing on individualised development, can provide a more robust form of

development beyond the traditional taught postgraduate courses for HE teachers. However, as noted above there are institutional and cultural barriers, which can impede the benefits which will require resolve and time to address. Nevertheless, feedback from APA apprentices, who have embraced all elements associated with an apprenticeship, indicate a rich, positive and impactful learning experience to date.

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A virtual lesson study: teacher professional learning during the pandemic

A think-piece and practice insight working paper Vincent Andrew, Wan Siti Zatil Hamizah Hj Abdur Rafae'a, and Nur Najmah Matshah

Introduction

Before covid-19 my experience of lesson study is memorable for its rich discussions and an awareness of what was going on around me in the meeting room or classroom. I could respond to situations in real time. All that changed when the pandemic shifted all teaching and interactions online. So, when I received a text from a teacher on the 1st April 2020, I was excited about how I could provide support. The teacher asked if I could look into her students' responses and there was a whiff of a hint about doing some collaborative work when she said another teacher was also giving her input.

I said we (the two teachers and myself) could discuss this further on Microsoft Teams. I did not think initially that the conversations we had on Microsoft Teams would morph into a virtual lesson study. I define virtual lesson study as one where all steps of a lesson study are carried out online. However, the conversation threads were beginning to resemble more and more what I experienced in a learning study (Lo, 2012). See Figure 1. I

knew this from my experience as a lesson study facilitator (Andrew, 2020).

For me, the realisation that we were conducting a learning study came after we had analysed the variation in student responses referred to as V1 in Figure 1. The teacher discussion was valuable because it brought up the idea about what students needed to learn – the critical aspects. A subsequent question in my head was 'What's next?' Do I stop this here and discontinue the discussion, or should I continue with the next step 'What do you do with this information and knowledge?'

The teacher discussion gave me an idea of a possible pattern of variation (V3 in Figure 1) and I invited the teachers to build on the pattern. To their credit, the teachers built on the planning (V2 in Figure 1) and came up with a more thorough plan for teaching the object of learning. The teacher in cycle 1 used this to guide the structure and flow of the lesson. On hindsight it was the right thing to support the teachers until they had an opportunity to see the impact of their work on their students and to reflect on that work.

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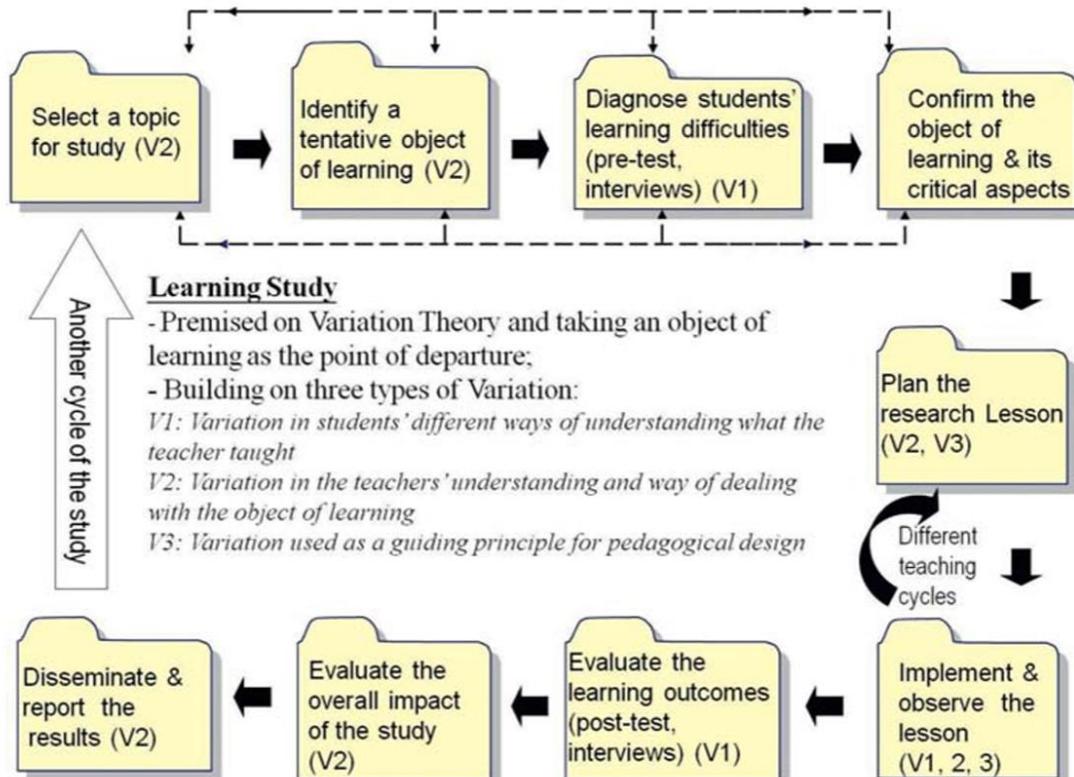


Figure 1: Procedures of a learning study (Lo, 2012)

A modified learning study

A learning study shares the iterative features (plan-teach-review cycle) of a lesson study. The main difference is that in the former an explicit theory of learning, usually the variation theory of learning, is used to design and evaluate lessons. The point of departure in a learning study is its focus on an object of learning. This entails the discussion of the critical aspects of the object of learning and the use of patterns of variation and invariance in lessons to help learners discern the critical aspects.

There was another crucial difference in this virtual learning study, that is, there was no lesson observation. Except for the teacher teaching the lesson synchronously on Zoom,

no lessons were observed by others on the team. In lesson study research, I have not come across studies where lessons were not observed by some members of the team. Lewis (2002) calls live research lessons the 'heart of lesson study' and argues that student learning and development cannot be assessed by looking at a lesson plan, or even by looking at most videotapes of lessons. Given that we are living in extraordinary times and social distancing measures are in place, how would a non-observation affect the study? To overcome this methodological issue, I find it useful to refer to O'Leary's (2014) idea of unseen observation where one of its central aims is to encourage the teacher to engage in a process of reflection and analysis of their

theories. He added that it is the teacher's perception of the taught lesson that provides the basis for the supervisor's work in their interaction with the teacher. In other words, the teacher's reflections can form a basis for the enacted object of learning as she experienced or described it.

In this study, we planned two cycles of learning study action research. Planning and reviewing of lessons were held online mostly asynchronously on the platform Microsoft Teams. Participants typed their thoughts on the chat function of Teams while documents such as student work and slides used in lessons were uploaded which allowed easy access for all of us. The chat function eliminated the need to transcribe our conversations.

Teaching was done synchronously with both teachers using Zoom and WhatsApp to communicate with their Year 12 students. Two research lessons were taught. In cycle 1, there were 8 students; cycle 2 there were 10 students. Each lesson was one hour. At the end of the two cycles, we communicated via video call on Microsoft Teams to review the learning study. The video call meeting was recorded and transcribed. The conversation threads and the video call transcript contained data on planning, teaching and evaluation of lessons. We analysed the data according to the themes that emerged.

The object of learning in this study

Due to space constraints a brief exposition of the curricular content and how the teachers handled it will be considered. Hamizah identified production possibility curves (PPC) as the topic. She had set a task for four pairs of students who are in their first year of A-level Economics. The question itself is current, getting students to use their economic understanding of PPC to understand the impact of the pandemic.

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At this point in time, do you think most economies in the world that are affected by Covid19 are producing at a point on/within/beyond the PPC? Explain your answer.

Najmah made her understanding of PPC in relation to the initial task as explicitly as possible. She wrote in the Team's chat:

it is possible that the economy reallocates the resources towards medical field, but also in the same time, moving to a point inside the PPC due to rising unemployment and it can be argued also that PPC shifts inwards due to death of working age population.

Three things could occur: a movement along the PPC, movement from a point on the PPC to a point inside the PPC, and a shift of the PPC inwards. The students' understanding was

quite different. Based on the students' different understandings, the teacher identified what students needed to learn: (1) understanding the "full employment / underemployment" - point on PPC and point inside, (2) Why PPC shifts? And (3) the difference between moving to a point inside and shift inwards. The lesson plan was developed collaboratively with the following pattern of variation and invariance. Figure 2 became the basis for how the lesson was taught in cycle 1.

Scenario	Resources over time	Output over time	Where on the PPC
1	invariant	varied	Movement on the PPC
2	invariant	varied	Movement from on the PPC to inside the PPC
3	varied	invariant	Shift (inwards) of PPC

Figure 2: Pattern of variation used in Cycle 1

Figure 2: Pattern of variation used in Cycle 1

Teacher professional learning

In a learning study, a second cycle is supposed to be an improvement of cycle 1. The knowledge gained from cycle 1 is normally incorporated into the planning for cycle 2. However, Najmah used a different approach from Hamizah. She did not explicitly use the pattern of variation contained in Figure 2. One activity she used in her lesson included a discussion of why a movement from a point inside to a point on the PPC did not incur opportunity cost but a movement along the PPC does. She introduced an activity where students had to decipher what it meant to 'reallocate resources from the private sector to the government sector ... and [why a point on

the PPC] means the government takes over the production of all goods and services'. She introduced discussions to help students discern what a shift inwards meant:

Yes, I did ask them why the PPC shift inwards ... [when there is a war] it's because of the infrastructure ... And then I said what happened to the people? So, I keep giving them questions as well. How about the people? The labour? Labour got killed as well. So that's why I used the websites as well like tsunami, the one that you gave the websites to just enhance their understanding further

By articulating what she did in the enactment of the lesson, Najmah made explicit how her teaching would help her students discern the object of learning. Although her approach was different, she was providing students with the opportunity of discerning the differences between a movement on the PPC, a movement inside, and a shift of the PPC. Although she did not use the pattern of variation that Hamizah used, she said that she 'took into account what the students needed to discern'. This was a powerful statement from Najmah, confirming what Earl and Timperley (2009) said that 'Through the process of explaining these theories to others who hold different views, what is known is made more explicit.' Although the enactment was different, both teachers offered the opportunities for student learning to discern the critical aspects. The learning outcomes from both classes suggest students have discerned the critical aspects. From the

post-tests the teachers found that the students were reconceptualising their idea of production possibility curves.

There is consensus amongst the two teachers that the virtual learning study was beneficial for their professional growth. Although we did not meet face to face at all during the whole learning study, Najmah commented that 'just because it's online it doesn't stop the variation and doing learning study [does not mean] it's not doable'. The benefit of this virtual learning study is encapsulated by Hamizah who reflected: 'I think I would have been stuck and moved on with it without really thinking further about how the lesson could be improved'. They have now shown an interest in taking part in another learning study on inflation in the near future.

Implications for practice

This virtual learning study, which took us three weeks, can be described as a relative success in meeting the professional development needs of the teachers and improving the quality of learning in the virtual classroom. There are also other real benefits conducting this learning study. Teachers save time travelling to a training venue. Online discussions can be recorded and transcribed. Documents can be shared easily on a reliable online platform. The planning and evaluation stages of this virtual learning study went smoothly. Teaching the

lessons virtually, however, was more challenging. There are some things technology cannot do. Hamizah reflected that 'in a normal physical classroom [students] can come up to the board ... if it's a diagram you could draw it on the board. On Zoom I'm not able to do that because it's a matter of conversing'. Technology may be good up to a point but her experience is that waiting for students to respond virtually feels like technology 'is slowing things down' and she is 'not ... able to see students' answers together [in] one go'. Najmah experienced low internet speed at times and she thinks that teaching online is a big challenge which demands some adjustment on her part. She says:

I don't like teaching alone, chalk and talk, I don't like one-sided talking to myself. I like to see my students. I like to ask them questions. It has been hard for me to make sure that everyone concentrates.

A virtual lesson study raises further questions. Who should be part of a virtual lesson study? In this research, there was understandably a lot of goodwill and trust between the facilitator and teachers. This goodwill and trust came from our previous experience of working together in the same school where I was their mentor during their initial teacher training practicum days. We were familiar with learning study and the use of variation theory to design lessons. Clearly, the composition of a learning

study team plays a part in reducing its dysfunction (Mynott, 2020) and the role of the facilitator cannot be underestimated. One could ask what the role of a facilitator may be in a virtual lesson study.

Would this virtual lesson study work with groups of teachers who may have different understandings of the purposes of lesson study? In this study the focus is on creating the necessary conditions for appropriating an object of learning through the empirical identification of critical aspects and enacting patterns of variation to make the discernment of critical aspects possible. The focus is thus narrower. If a virtual lesson study has a

different focus from this study, what may be its outcomes?

Will virtual lesson study be a model of professional development for the foreseeable future even if the pandemic has ended? How will virtual lesson study work in other contexts, example, with young children, other curriculum subjects, etc? What may be the experience of the teacher participants?

Answers to the above questions can shed some more light about the efficacy of virtual lesson study.

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Some thoughts on growth, nourishment, and connections

A think piece working paper by Diana Tremayne

Some thoughts on growth, nourishment, and connections...

As I tie up some of the loose ends of my thesis I was posed a question, or perhaps a challenge, by my supervisors about making use of a metaphor to help do this. It's not that there aren't already plenty of metaphors running through the thesis but they are perhaps disconnected, not totally surprisingly, as the writing process has been taking shape over a long period of time and my thoughts have developed in different ways as it has gone on. Turning the parts into a whole which flows at least reasonably smoothly has been challenging, with moments of clarity sometimes getting lost in the volume of words and data which run through the different chapters.

This is an attempt to pull together some of the phrases, ideas and metaphors which appear at various points and see how they work together.

One of the recurring themes in the thesis is that of growth: of teacher agency growing in places where 'agency has forgotten to grow' (Mycroft and Sidebottom, 2018, p.176), of teachers growing in confidence both individually and collectively, and of teachers

also 'growing their own' professional learning in democratic and participatory ways (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2010, p. 86). Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2010) connect this idea of growth to the trend towards local and sustainable eating which has developed over recent years, suggesting that just as local produce can be the most sustaining, so can the sharing of the everyday contexts and experiences of teachers be particularly enriching. As someone who lives in the place where the 'Incredible Edible' movement began this resonates in many ways.

In the pre-Covid-19 world, the culmination of a morning's gardening with Incredible Edible Todmorden was a shared meal, providing not just physical nourishment but also opportunities to chat, reflect, and develop new ideas with a wide range of people. Some listened more than they spoke, many were regulars but others were visitors from nearby and further afield. Some played central roles in various ways, but all appeared to gain something from the occasion and many grew connections and friendships which then supported the growth of other possibilities. Learning may not obviously have been a primary objective of such gatherings but there will have been multiple opportunities for it to

occur in different ways and be part of the nourishment provided through participating. Sharing experiences and building relationships are integral to this process, it is not about only valuing one experience but about recognising the differences and similarities of many.

The idea of professional learning as something which can and does 'nourish both individuals and their communities' (ibid, p. 86) fits well with both my own experience of UKFEchat and that which I have gained through observation of it and shared conversations with those who also participate in it. Lieberman and Pointer Mace also describe this concept of professional learning as 'intentionally local, humble, [and] sustainable' (ibid) and this is worth considering in relation to online spaces where 'local' may not be a word which automatically springs to mind. However, perhaps a significant point is that spaces such as UKFEchat offer the opportunity to combine local knowledge of practice with a broader community of open-minded practitioners and thus connect it to wider educational, social and political issues (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). The blend of informality and structure in UKFEchat which crosses the boundaries of home and work also helps to build a sense of a space which still feels local, friendly and relatively democratic but which is also able (and willing) to welcome newcomers and visitors in ways which reflect many of the aspects of the third place (Oldenburg, 1999) while also supporting

opportunities for learning. The online nature of the space and the use of a hashtag potentially open it up to a wider audience than a physical space while the mainly synchronous activity can help to build a sense of community, and although this may be harder to access for those who do not take part in 'real' time (McArthur and White, 2016), this study suggests that developing this sense of community is not impossible.

Nourishment comes through 'sharing the fruits of their labors' (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2010, p. 86) and this is key to making it work, firstly through bringing people together to share their experiences and then by building the connections and relationships that support the exchange of ideas, support, and thinking during the Twitter chats. I would argue that this feeling of nourishment is also what results in sufficient participants giving the commitment and time (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996) needed to sustain spaces such as UKFEchat over a relatively long period of time. Another key element of this study is the ways in which people indicate that their participation in one space links to and helps to sustain the other places in which they engage, and vice versa. Rather than an insular space, this is about networks and communities which overlap and about the shifting boundaries between them. Whilst the movement between spaces may not be straightforward or automatic it highlights the ways in which the 'grow your own' approach to learning

provided in spaces such as UKFEchat can provide multiple forms of nourishment which offer possibilities for the growth of collaboration and teacher agency far beyond the Twitter chat itself.

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Parts of this piece are also drawn from my doctoral thesis which has been submitted to Leeds Beckett University.

Man, I feel like a Woman! A reflection on the gendered implications of living through lockdown.

A Practice Insight Working Paper by Anne Temple Clothier

I am the single parent of a twenty-year-old daughter, a Higher Education teaching practitioner and an independent researcher; who presents as a Higher Education teaching practitioner, independent researcher and single parent at work, and the distinction is significant. For the last twenty years the context of my professional practice has made it very clear that parenting should not impact on my availability, the quality of my professional practice, or my professional identity.

I will not bore you with the challenges of a morning routine to create a 'front of house' image, dropping the child at school before 8.00am to beat the rush hour traffic, because I hope you require less aesthetic manipulation than me to create a professional identity. Nor will I dwell for too long on my memories of taking my baby to work, her sleeping in a car seat on my desk, when the teaching scheduled dictated evening classes, and a series of student cohorts watched my toddler drawing with crayons mature into a teenager playing on a mobile phone on the back row of weekend delivery. She benefitted from a trip to Ireland when I was asked to facilitate input

on a master's course, and although as a ten-year-old she found the six-hour long sessions tiring, she also gained a deeper understanding of the theoretical underpinning of both Educational Policy and Ethical Leadership and Management. I did consider engaging with International Conferences as a way to broaden her horizons; however the financial costs, persuading her to sit still, and the restrictions associated with accommodating her bedtime, seemed to make this a far less attractive proposition than traveling with an adult partner or lover, so we stayed at home.

Fortunately, a decade after I became a Senior Lecturer, the sector-wide decision to make a Doctorate the entry level qualification for HE teaching practitioners coincided with my daughters 12th year. Consequently, her four-year journey to GCSEs, and mine towards a doctorate, involved both of us doing homework (in separate rooms) evenings and weekends - as the 'day reserved for doctoral study' had yet to be invented. Although some may say she was neglected, by 2016 our academic profiles contained a doctorate and a respectable range of GCSE grades. We may never get those years back, but equally no-

one can take the results away from us. Four years later, I have gained Independent Researcher status (for research that was for the most part completed outside of working hours), and she is in her final year of an undergraduate programme living away from home when lockdown started, and this is when life got both interesting and amusing.

From March 2020, I spent three months living in pyjamas, did my ironing during Examination Boards and rolled fags during staff meetings, shielded by the Camera-‘Off’ button. Being alone, I could finish a sentence in my own head, choose what to focus on, and had the time to complete the three papers I had been struggling to finish throughout semester two. Once they were done, it was a leisurely month of translating three-hour lectures into bite-sized pre-recordings and uploading them onto the university Virtual Learning Environment whilst waiting for the finalisation of Teams so that the interactive element of the modules could be added. In addition, the ability to structure my own social interactions meant that I spent much time with my favourite colleagues, scoping out research ideas, emotionally supporting each other, and generally putting the world to rights. We laughed, we cried, and above all we were creative, freed from instructional direction; we researched the issues we were passionate about and, perhaps not surprisingly, a research paper was born.

The computer screen, my eyes on the world, revealed the habitus of my workmates. I saw the bedrooms of my male colleagues, witnessed them being interrupted by partners, children and pets; their attire lacked its previous crispness, and their hair grew longer. I saw the growing fatigue caused by constant contact with young children, the relentless need for patience and tolerance when ‘time at work’ does not provide respite from parenthood, and I was pleased I was on my own.

Whilst observing the aesthetic decline of my male counterparts I caught myself thinking ‘You are starting to let yourself go’ and ‘Couldn’t you put a bit of lippy on?’. Although I know that these men had never actually worn lipstick on campus, I guess the mantras we grow up with are hard to silence. I consider it a shame that the males who had used these lines with me are now retired, so there is no opportunity to turn my gaze on them. I mused that this may be what it feels like to be one of those ‘clear-headed males’ that have traditionally done so well at work. To not have a primary-care role for children; to not feel pressured to wear make-up and uncomfortable clothes for work, to not have to pretend to care more than I do, to have an extended working day, to have more control over social engagements and research endeavours. Was I finally working through my penis envy, or was I just coming to terms with it? Either way, it felt good to be a woman,

embrace this queer way of living, and find both empowerment and peace.

However, according to Duncanson *et al.* (2020, para.1) “In a sign of the gendered nature of the pandemic’s impacts, men’s research submissions to academic journals almost instantly increased by 50%, single-author articles by women dropped”. In addition, Khan and Siriwardhane’s upcoming paper suggests:

Female researchers reported excessive workloads were the greatest constraint on undertaking research ... But lack of academic mentoring ... and weight of family responsibilities were significant barriers to publication ... and thus to career progression. (Duncanson *et al.*, 2020, para.9)

Also, Weir and Duncanson (2020) note that the gender impact of COVID-19 policies has resulted in an increase in workloads and care responsibilities across all gender categories, resulting in academics reporting workloads of at least 50 hours per week. However, given that women and their gender non-binary colleagues are responsible “for delivering the majority of teaching”, they are the ones who “felt this impact more acutely” (Duncanson *et al.*, 2020, para.16). Also, because they are working more hours, it is these groups who report that their research is suffering as a consequence of their increased teaching and service workloads, with a third of the

respondents indicating they are also providing care for others in need of support:

Women with caring responsibilities are suffering the most. Although over 50% of academics with primary-school-aged children recorded that they share home-schooling responsibilities, over 50% of women respondents with caring obligations reported being solely responsible for home schooling and the care of adults requiring support. (Duncanson *et al.*, 2020, para.20)

By contrast, only 8% of the male respondents indicated they were “solely responsible for home-schooling”. Duncanson *et al.*, (2020, para.21), from the perspective of Australia, conclude:

Many women academics are working around the clock to meet the needs of their work and their families.

The survey during the pandemic found women are also less likely to have a dedicated workspace. They work at dining room and kitchen tables, in living rooms and even garages. Women academics report being unable to dedicate even 20-minute periods to teaching, let alone research.

COVID-19 restrictions are laying bare structural discrimination at the heart of universities across Australia and making it worse.

Universities represent a microcosm of middle-class society. Academic life is understood to be comfortable and progressive. The heavily gendered structure of labour and reward even in this environment indicates how entrenched structural disadvantage and privilege are. And these conditions are calcifying as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

My reflection is this: whilst I benefited from the time-rich headspace forced isolation brings, others in similar positions would find it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing necessary to remain competitively employable in the current circumstances. I am

aware that the relative freedoms associated with parenting a twenty-year-old play a significant part in privileging me in this context. Although my view of the current landscape is impacted by the intersections of a range of factors, it does lead me to question whether the existing modes of oppression are reduced, or merely shape-shift the ways they place knees on necks. In addition, the pandemic appears to be amplifying pre-existing structural inequalities. Until the opportunities to thrive are free from patterns of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, aesthetics and physical abilities, how can we be sure that 'progress' is being made? The lockdown has provided me with some insights as to what it might mean to be male, but ultimately, man, I feel like a woman.

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 Accessed: 20/10/2020

Book Review of Mannion, J. and McAllister, K (2020) *Fear is the Mind Killer*, Published by John Catt

Review by Mark Quinn

'If you had a magic wand, what's the one thing you would change about your pupils?' This is the question that James Mannion and Kate McAllister open their new book with, and it's one they frequently ask teachers. Teachers tell them that they want their pupils to be more independent, less needy, more responsive to feedback. So far, so predictable. But it was the response of one colleague that summed up Mannion and McAllister's joint passion – a passion that has led to a PhD, a professional development programme and even the creation of a new school – that gave this resultant, triumphant, joyful book its counter-intuitive title.

'I don't think a day goes by where I don't refer . . . to how fear of failure is paralysis for the brain. How just being afraid of getting things wrong will stop you learning faster than anything . . . Because it's true. It's like in Dune, isn't it? Fear is the mind killer.'

Fear for Mannion and McAllister (as it is for *Dune's* author Frank Herbert) is 'the little-death that brings total obliteration.' In a classroom, it is the substance that prevents a child from raising their hand, even when they do know the answer; it's the thing that prevents pupils from learning from their

mistakes, because they are too fearful to make the mistake in the first place.

The authors faced this – and perhaps their own – fear when they took on the leadership of a novel Learning Skills programme at their secondary school in the south of England. Given licence by their headteacher, Stuart McLaughlin, and a generous allocation of curriculum time, they grew their team and their programme over the 8 ensuing years, tracking four cohorts of students from year 7 through to GCSE. They cast their programme as a 'complex intervention' of many moving parts (explored powerfully and pragmatically in their sprawling fifth chapter), but boiled down to the three goodies – metacognition, self-regulation and oracy. The interaction between these three is what (in their 'theory of action') results in more effective, self-regulated learners. Any teacher interested in such skills, and any leader interested in embedding them across their school, could do a whole lot worse than to keep a learning journal (a favourite technique) as they read this chapter. Their entire learning to learn curriculum is here, replete with rationale and what it looks like in practice. If you were not a fan of project-based learning before, you might well be converted by the time you have

read about their allotment project and the £2 challenge.

Converts are definitely on the authors' minds here. I have never read a book of educational leadership stratagems or pedagogical approaches so determined to give airtime to its potential detractors. They freely admit that many previous L2L attempts have failed upon first contact with a classroom. They devote an entire chapter to putting 'Learning to Learn on Trial', giving full voice to those for whom knowledge is foundational, children are novices and skills are non-transferable. But, being a 'trial', the case is also put for the defence. They explore why educational initiatives, however promising on paper or successful in micro, often flounder when scaled up: it's the lethal mutations which eat away from within. Their answer is implementation science – for which they provide a checklist. They advocate for an implementation team, drawn from all sections of the staff. They contend that Learning to Learn skills should be both *transferred out of* dedicated lessons and *transferred into* subjects across the curriculum. They argue strongly for clear communication about the vision and purpose, and for rigorous monitoring of the impact, not just of the acquisition of learning skills but on academic attainment too.

For the naysayers, that might just be the clincher here. At their school, where they implemented L2L with treatment and control cohorts at key stage 3, then tracked their outcomes at GCSE, there were 'statistically significant gains in subject learning among the *Learning Skills* cohort as a whole and among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.' This is just the first punch in a barrage of 5 research findings. They found too a correlation between the quality of *Learning Skills* provision in year 7 with their eventual attainment at GCSE. The programme was associated with a narrowing of the disadvantage gap at GCSE by over 65%. An analysis of qualitative data suggested that transfer of learning skills into other subjects did take place in a range of ways. And there were non-cognitive gains too, with improvements in attitudes to learning, interpersonal skills and public speaking.

Early in their book, Mannion and McAllister admit that the literature on Learning to Learn has to this point presented a polarised picture. It offers either 'high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence' or something rather different: 'a snake oil hoax peddled by unwitting hipsters.' On the evidence of this book, I would say that Learning to Learn is no snake oil. For this reader, the fear has gone.

A sketchnote of personal reflections from the plenary day of 'Better Conversations, enhancing education one discussion at a time'

By Jasmine Miller

On 5th December 2020 we held a celebration of professional practice and learning on the plenary day of our month long CollectivED knowledge exchange in partnership with Growth Coaching International and Instructional Coaching Group

Our event theme was 'Better Conversations, enhancing education one discussion at a time'

Jasmine Miller's sketchnote capture some of the insights



Sustainability, Efficacy and Methodology of Lesson Study, WALS 2020 International Conference

A conference review by Vincent Andrew

Originally planned to be held in San Francisco, the United States, the World Association of Lesson Studies (WALS) International Conference was pushed online due to the covid-19 pandemic. It was conducted over three days (2nd to 4th December 2020) over three time zones with the majority of presentations pre-recorded but Q&A was held live. Following WALS @WALessonStudy, WALS2020 @WALSConference and paper presenters was useful to keep up to date with what was happening. Much credit should go to the WALS organisers for taking the decision to hold the conference online, and in the process I believe they can see the potential benefit of an online conference in the future should the pandemic situation fail to improve.

From a participant's point of view, the Conference was refreshing for me. The last WALS Conference I attended was in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2013 – a conference I remember much for the hospitality I received from my Swedish friends and the no-pay leave I had to take to make the journey from Brunei Darussalam to Sweden to present my paper. There was no such concern for this online WALS Conference. Registration was relatively easy and relatively affordable (USD50 for me

but free for PhD students and early career researchers).

The real test I suppose of the success of any academic Conference, amongst other things, is the quality of what the presenters had to say. Is there anything new? What new angles and perspectives will presenters take? How will the presenters take lesson study forward? The big ideas of lesson study include teachers collaboratively performing research on their lessons, combining practical knowledge and external knowledge, learning from students' learning, and systematic fine tuning of lesson designs (Schipper et al, 2020).

There are three areas that the Conference has contributed to my thinking of lesson study. These are methodology, measurement of efficacy of lesson study and sustainability.

Sustainability, Efficacy and Methodology

In Brunei, we use a more specific form of lesson study called learning study. Research suggests that starting lesson study with students' different ways of experiencing the object of learning is particularly useful to change teachers' understanding of teaching (Wood & Sithamparam, 2021), together with the use of the variation theory of learning

(Marton, 2015) to design and evaluate lessons. The use of a learning theory is a critical feature not mentioned in the presentations. Nevertheless, the Brunei lesson study model can be strengthened by looking more closely at its methodology to increase its efficacy and sustainability.

Seleznyoz (2020) suggested that the sustainability of LS depends on the national cultural profile, implementation paradigm and fidelity to components of LS. Her study makes me think that adaptation rather than fidelity can make LS a more powerful experience for teachers in the Brunei context. My preliminary thinking about adaptation here means thinking of ways to get the teachers more involved in the research, for example by interviewing three case pupils from different backgrounds (Dudley, 2014). I think this can add value to the mapping of conceptions of phenomena that the Brunei lesson study undertakes presently. Adaptations can also mean slowing down the process of lesson study by extending the period of time between meetings to allow space for teachers to do the research and to make sense of the data before we meet. Lesson study protocol can be made more explicit before it begins and in particular how to provide 'safe spaces to study, take risks and to innovate in teaching and to share and report successes and failures' (Bannon et al, 2020). Instead of having all sessions face to face, a blended learning approach can be considered to

reduce travel time and cost. If an online lesson study is inevitable due to the pandemic, Sui and Wouter (2020) remind us that an online lesson study requires a platform for mutual and open discussion, that we need to 'create opportunities for exchange of ideas and opinions synchronously and asynchronously'.

To measure the efficacy of lesson study, Hoznour (2020) used diagrams and a binary (yes-no) survey which can reveal the extent of teacher-centeredness or student-centeredness of teaching and how the teacher's beliefs may change over the lesson study process. I also found Stipsits and Robnagl's (2020) presentation has direct relevance to my current work. They developed a catalogue of competences used at the beginning and at the end of the lesson or learning study cycles in order to make participants aware of their competence development. What strikes me is that the participants self-assess their competences. In my country which has a tool to measure teacher performance and competences, it is others who assess teacher competences. I wish to know how this catalogue can be adapted to the needs of participants in Brunei.

Potential future research

Two directions are being considered. First, how will the adaptations of lesson study in the Brunei context affect teachers' experience

of learning professionally? Second, Mynott's question – what happens to learning in a lesson study after a cycle ends? (Mynott, 2020). This is a tantalizing question for me, not least because I am interested in what has happened to the teachers who have worked with me on lesson study in the past.

Final thoughts

It has been a privilege to listen in to the wisdom and expertise of our colleagues

engaged in lesson study. I have not listened to everything but registering for the conference means we can have access to the videos and artefacts until December 2021. What a gift this is and surely one of the best things the organisers have done for the teacher community. I look forward to WALs 2021 and maybe present a paper. See you all in Hong Kong / Macau.

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Contributing a CollectivED working paper

Introduction

CollectivED publish working papers written by researchers, practitioners and students on the themes of coaching, mentoring, professional learning and development in education. We publish these at <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/collectived/working-paper-series/>

Contributors to the working paper series are given Carnegie School of Education Professional Associate status making them eligible to use the Leeds Beckett University library facility (in person or online). They can also apply to become CollectivED Fellows.

Purpose and audience

The CollectivEd working papers are intended as an opportunity to connect educational practice, policy and research focusing on coaching, mentoring and related forms of professional development. They are written with a diverse audience in mind: teachers, governors and school leaders, academics and students, members of grassroots organisations, advocates, influencers and policy makers at all levels. We intend that the content and audience is national and international. The working papers will enable a diverse range of informed voices in education to co-exist in each publication, in order to encourage scholarship and debate.

Invitation to contribute and article types

We invite academic staff, research students, teachers, school leaders, and members of the wider education professional practitioner communities to contribute papers. This is chance to share practice, research and insights. All papers submitted should demonstrate criticality, going beyond descriptive accounts, problematizing professional development and learning practices and policy where appropriate and recognising tensions that exist in the realities of educational settings and decision making. The following types of contribution are welcome, and some flexibility will be built in around these:

- **Research working papers:** These might be in the form of summaries of empirical research, case studies, action research or research vignettes. These will normally be about 2000-2500 words in length, and will be fully referenced using Harvard Referencing. Please limit the amount of references to those which are absolute necessary to the understanding of the article, and use the most recent references possible. Research papers should include a consideration of the implications for practice and/or policy at an appropriate scale. Research papers should be accompanied by an abstract (max 250 words). Abstracts should outline the research undertaken, methodology and conclusions drawn.
- **Practice insight working papers:** These will be focused on aspects of relevant professional learning and development practice, and should communicate its particular features, its context and the decision making that shapes it. These will normally be 1200-1800 words in length and should reference policies or research that influence the practice.

- **Think-piece working papers:** These offer opportunities for writers to share opinions, reflections or critiques of relevant professional learning and development practice, research and/or policy. These will normally be 750-1250 words in length. They may include responses to previously published working papers.
- **Book or conference reviews:** Reviews are published of events or books which relate to the themes of coaching, mentoring or professional learning in education settings. These often include personal reflections from the author as well as elements of reportage. These will normally be 750-1250 words in length.

Writing style and guidance

In order for the working paper series to be inclusive and become a platform for a range of voices we would expect a range of writing styles. However, we do need to maintain the following writing conventions.

- Papers will be written in English, which should be accessible and clear to a range of readers. Text can be broken up with subheadings, bullet points, diagrams and other visuals.
- Papers cannot be submitted anonymously. The names of author(s) should be clearly stated, and where appropriate their educational context should be made clear (secondary teacher, PhD student, education consultant, ITE tutor etc).
- Names of schools, universities and other organisations can be included, and we require authors to confirm that they have consent to do so.
- Children and young people may not be identified by name and every effort should be made to ensure that their identities remain confidential.
- Adults (such as colleagues, and professional or research partners) may only be named with their consent, and where appropriate we encourage joint authorship.
- A limited number of images may be submitted with the papers, but please note that we will use discretion when including them according to formatting limitations. Please be clear if the inclusion of an image (such as a diagram or table) is critical to the working paper.
- No submitted photographs of children will be published, although the Carnegie School of Education may select appropriate images from stock photograph libraries.
- While we will not publish papers written as a sales pitch we are happy for papers to be written which engage critically and professionally with resources, programmes, courses or consultancy, and weblinks can be included.
- Each paper should state a corresponding author and include an email address, and / or twitter handle.

Submission and review

Papers for consideration for CollectivED working papers should be submitted via email to R.M.Lofthouse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

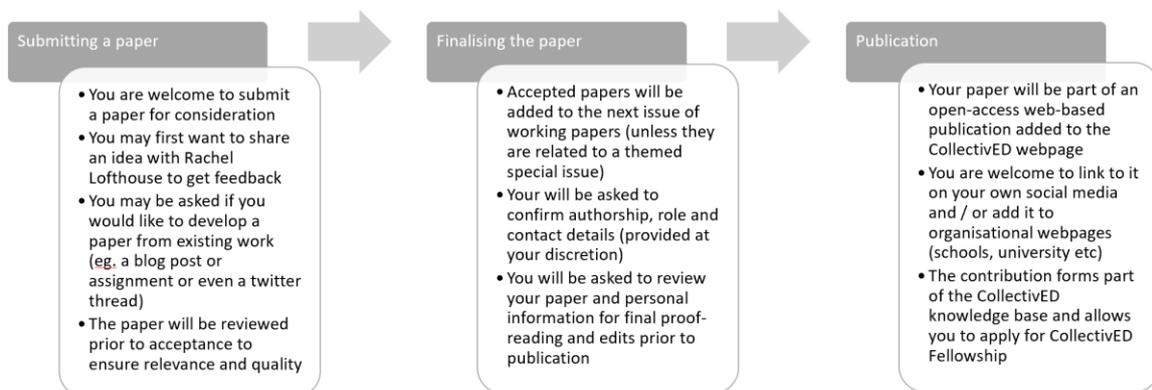
They should be submitted as word documents, Arial 11 font, 1.5 line spacing, with subheadings included as appropriate. Each word document should include the title, names of authors, context

and affiliations of the authors. Essential images should be embedded in the word document, and discretionary images should be sent as attachments.

Each submission will be reviewed by the working paper series editorial team. Decisions will be made in a timely fashion and any guidance for resubmission will be communicated to the authors. Once an issue of CollectivED is collated authors will be asked to undertake final proof-reading prior to publication.

CollectivED Working Papers; route to publication

The CollectivED Working Papers form an invaluable open access resource. Their focus is practice, policy and research on coaching, mentoring and professional development. The content and audience are national and international. Working papers give a voice to practitioners, researchers, and members of professional and grass-roots organisations. They enable scholarship and provoke debate.



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