LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Special Issue

CollectivED Working Papers Mentors Matter

April 2020

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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To cite working papers from this issue please use the following format:

Author surname, author initial (2020), Paper title, CollectivED [10], pages x-xx, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University.

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Editorial; Why Mentors Matter

by CollectivED Director Rachel Lofthouse

To whom do mentors matter? A certainty is that when in training or during induction our new teachers need mentors; more experienced colleagues who can provide insight, support and guidance for those entering the profession. When I planned this special issue of the CollectivED working papers it was largely with these colleagues in mind. But, of course in some education contexts the role of mentors is developed beyond this initial professional phase, and opportunities and initiatives have emerged which enable mentoring to be extended to different career phases. In this editorial we do start at the beginning, but through the papers included in this issue we extend our gaze from there. We think about mentoring as a relationship between two individuals and we also think of mentoring as a means of building cultures of professional learning across faculties, schools and networks.

In March 2020 the journal Professional Development in Education published a new research paper with the title 'I would be a completely different teacher if I had been with a different mentor': Ways in which educative mentoring matters as novices learn to teach'. It was based on two-year US based study, by Lindsay Joseph Wexler, which followed student teachers from their training year into their first year as qualified teachers. As the abstract states it reveals some of 'what novices take up from their student-teaching mentors and take with them into their first-year teaching'. The good news is that mentoring and mentors make a difference, as our special issue title confirms 'Mentors Matter'. The more difficult news is that not all mentoring is equally educative or supportive. And whatever form of mentoring is experienced it does make a difference to our new teachers are when they enter the profession.

This collection of papers is being published at an unprecedented time, with huge global interruption to our routines and education landscape caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. One significant concern is how the disruption impacts on those student teachers who are due to complete their placements in schools as the basis of their professional qualification. In England as schools have closed their doors weeks before the Easter holiday training providers will be recommending awarding of Qualified Teacher Status under unusual circumstances. This has caused stress and

disquiet for both those awaiting qualification and their tutors. In official terms the anxiety is about the 'pipeline' of new teachers at a time with teacher recruitment and retention is already strained. But at a more human scale there have been interruptions to mentoring relationships, and an unease about how shorter placements may impact on the confidence and competence of new teachers in that pipeline who will be entering schools as new teachers in very challenging times.

At this time of uncertainty, it seems of value to focus on positives, so I put out a tweet request,

> Calling student / trainee teachers who are awaiting news on QTS. I hope your school placements were a great experience. I'm writing about why #MentorsMatter & I'd love to include some tweet quotes from you if you can share the impact your mentor had on your learning & development.

It has been reassuring to hear from student teachers who wants to share their experiences. Their tweets in reply to mine show just how much emotional and professional support they had received from their mentors, how they have gained confidence through being mentored, how their mentors have encouraged them to develop their own pedagogic repertoires, and how even in a time of crisis their mentors have ensured that their needs are met. The replies over the next few pages, which came from student and trainee teacher from Early Years and Foundation Stage, through Primary and Secondary and into FE, were the ones received within two days, and show just how much Mentors Matter.

This special issue of CollectivED working papers, explores some of the tensions, practices and opportunities presented by the necessary co-existence of student and trainee teachers and early career teachers with their mentors. Our contributors provide perspectives from research and practice and across a range of education phases and sectors. As always, these papers are authored by a wide range of contributors, and you can find out more about them on page 61-62.

Note and reference

This is a companion issue to our Advanced Mentoring Special Issue, published in 2018 which can be found at https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/schools/november-2018.pdf?la=en.

Lindsay Joseph Wexler (2020) 'I would be a completely different teacher if I had been with a different mentor': Ways in which educative mentoring matters as novices learn to teach, Professional Development in Education, 46:2, 211-228, DOI: 10.1080/19415257.2019.1573375

Mentors Matter …. student and trainee teachers say thankyou



@Steve_J_Q



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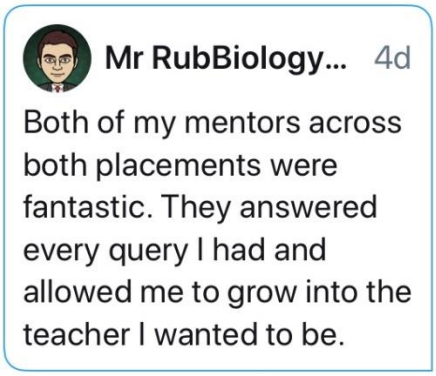

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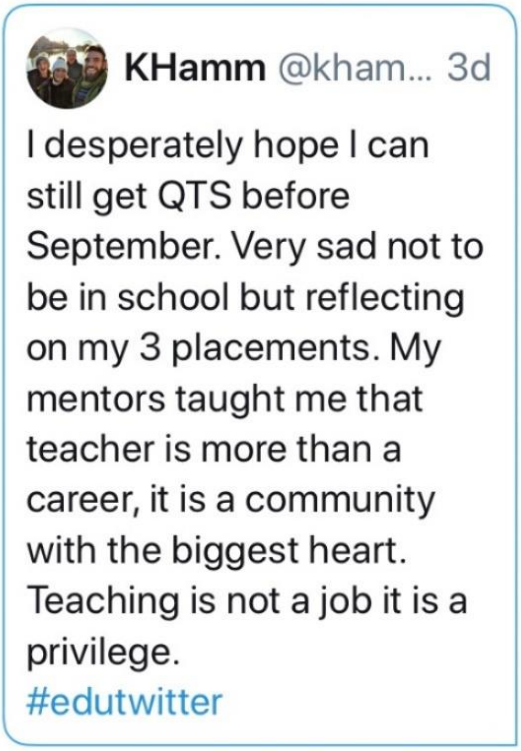

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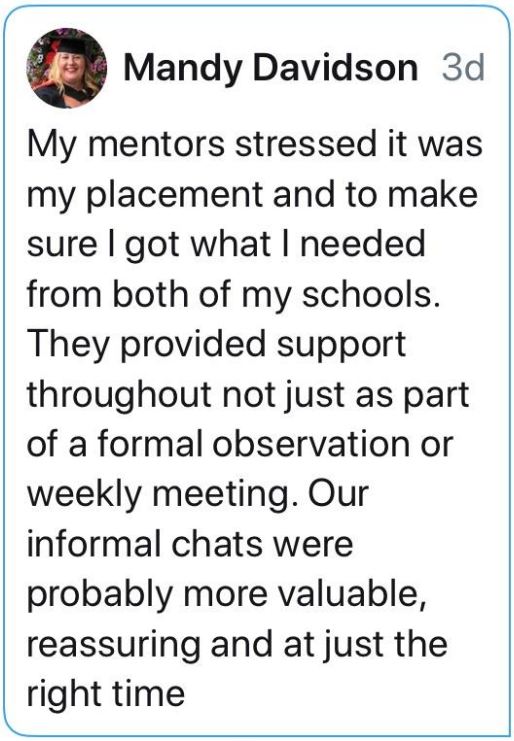

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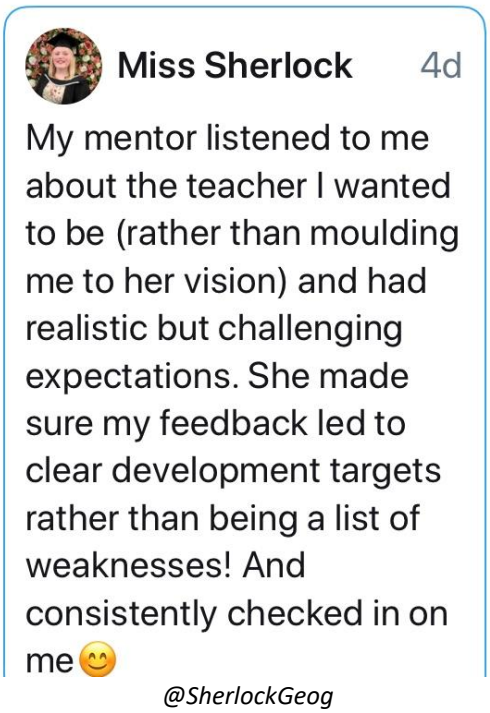

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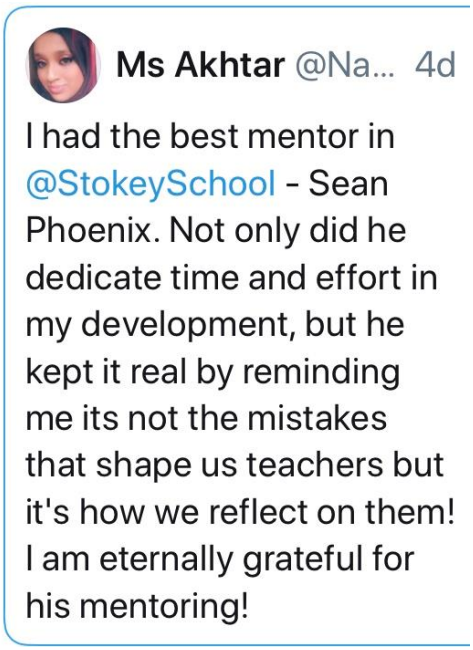

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WHO wants to be a mentor?

A research working paper by Elinor Doherty

For me, the role of the Professional Mentor in a school setting is interesting. How did they achieve that position? Was it voluntary? Then leading on from this, how do they then encourage teachers into mentoring within their schools? I have seen a number of methods used: recommendation from a colleague, a call out for volunteers and on occasion because of the practicalities of the situation, mentoring can fall on someone who is not suited to it or does not want to do it and feels forced.

An argument for careful mentor selection is presented by Hobson (2016) in terms of matching mentor and mentee and this may, according to David and Clutterbuck (2013), involve an element of two people selecting each other so that the mentee feels they have a voice from the outset and that the relationship is two way. This is not possible in some education contexts, especially for example on ITE programmes where on school placements, associate teachers are placed with a mentor of the school's choosing. Yet the construction of this relationship from the start is crucial before any actual coaching and mentoring can take place. Schools can face a challenge in terms of finding suitable mentors from within their ranks. In my experience as a middle leader, I often did the mentoring and coaching within the department whether it was of associate teachers or experienced colleagues. A colleague would have made an excellent mentor, particularly to associate teachers, but due to pressures of time and performance assessment (measured against examination results), he was unwilling to mentor.

There is debate around the position that a mentor or coach should have in relation to who they are coaching. Parsloe and Leedham (2009) argue that the coach-mentor relationship is difficult if the person undertaking the role is also the line manager, thus conversations can become directive and, coupled together with the accountability that comes with being a line manager, the independence needed for a coachee-coach relationship is therefore lost. This is supported by McIntyre and Hobson (2016) who present the case for an external mentor, after their research into physics students training on the Physics Enhancement Programme. This independent figure would enable mentees to openly discuss development areas away from the standards and performance indicators that they were subjected to within a school environment. This initial research has been

further developed by Daly and Milton (2017) who have considered the work of external mentors in Wales, concluding that what they term “risky conversations” enable these mentors to encourage criticality and confidence in their NQTs and RQTs. This risky talk can happen specifically because, as they are working with external mentors, they are inhabiting a “third space” outside of the school environment. It could be a physical space in terms of being in a different place or a cognitive space which is not linked to school or university context but purely practice and pedagogy. For external mentors who have worked as school mentors previously, inhabiting this third space where risky talk is encouraged, is heresy and uncomfortable. School environments are so often about mission and loyalty, and this is ingrained.

Heresies are not to be derogated or dismissed. To deem an idea as heretical is to dismiss it without counsel or consideration. The social construction of heresy is, in this sense, a powerful ideological force. It suppresses proper discussion of choices and alternatives by patronizingly disregarding their seriousness or by undermining the personal credibility of those who advance them. (Hargreaves, 1994, p.163).

Yet it is these risky conversations as Daly and Milton (2017) found in their research, that the mentees found most valuable in terms of development of their thinking and practice. Furthermore, the third space also has implications for mentors in terms of deepening their own self-awareness, critical reflection and evaluation. A mentoring relationship that is two way therefore can result in benefits for mentor and mentee. The practicalities and expense of using external mentors would be an issue for schools in England but with further research in this area and taking lessons from the welsh experience, a solution can surely be found.

Effective coachee or mentee behaviours have an equally important role. Teachers who have been coached effectively, or are coaches themselves, are more open to it according to Jacobs, Boardman, et al (2018). However, in ITE, associate teachers lack experience of being mentored and coached and this can lead to considerable adjustments in their attitude and approach during their training. As Mackie (2017) recognises in her study of Scottish ITE,

Both class teacher mentors and mentees recognised learning as a key element of the role of the mentee. Class teacher mentors placed importance on mentees being keen

and committed to learn a variety of aspects about classroom practice. (p.631).

Indeed, enthusiasm was found by Hudson (2013) to be the most important attribute for pre-service teachers that mentors articulated in his research. It is interesting to consider how this enthusiasm is formed as well as how it manifests itself. Whilst Hudson acknowledges there is more research to be done in this area, it is clear that enthusiasm alone cannot sustain a career in teaching, it is also important to develop resilience to ensure longevity. Moreover, Hudson highlights a commitment to children and lifelong learning, as well as the ability to be reflective, as further desirable attributes for mentees.

With the introduction of the Early Career Framework in England and an emphasis on developing RQTs, creating coaching cultures in our schools becomes all the more important. Effective mentoring and coaching in our schools is the way to encourage the mentors and coaches of the future and arguably that is the most important reason why it should be a greater focus in our schools. As mentoring ITE students is often how teachers get into mentoring, perhaps universities and other providers need to consider how we explain mentoring and encourage teachers to get involved.

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A new paradigm and challenge for school-based ITT mentors

A think piece working paper by Derek Boyle

Introduction

In this think-piece the author reflects on the emerging challenges for Initial Teacher Training mentors in response to the new ITT Core Content Framework requirements published by the DfE [1]. The wording within the framework specifies that the trainee teacher "following expert input" should be able to contextualise their core training and be able to apply this to the classroom, through professional competencies.

This explicit focus on the role of local, contextualised training and specific training to be delivered by the mentors will mean for many ITT providers a change in emphasis of their induction and on-going Continuing Professional Development for the placement mentors.

The rationale

The Core Content Framework was developed to form the basic training entitlement for trainee teachers to enable them to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) before they then progress on to the Early Career Framework (ECF) [2]. These two stages of training and early professional development form a central strand of the DfE's *Recruitment and Retention strategy* [3] for teaching.

The tensions

Currently the approaches taken by the wide range of ITT providers to the core curricula of their programmes has led to wide differences between the amount and quality of training that is being delivered to prepare trainees for their early careers. The plethora of training routes and different types of partnerships between trainees, their placement schools, local training staff and the central ITT provider training team has resulted in a mixed economy in terms of who is responsible for each element of the training towards the award of QTS.

The challenge for ITT providers is now how to define who provides the training for each of the elements and any changes to the evidence requirements that they feel is necessary, while being mindful of the workload implications for all stakeholders.

The training expectations for placement mentors are now strictly defined, which, provides new challenges for both them and the central training team at the ITT provider.

The role of centre-based staff

Within the approach that the central team will be taking to ensure that all aspects of the Core Content Framework are being delivered, they must consider carefully the training rationale and programme for the school-based mentors. As well as the traditional knowledge and skills development of the mentors aligned to the National Mentoring Standards [4], the provider will need to provide high quality training materials and guidance on how to deliver the explicit Core content expectations.

A training model for placement mentors

Within the ITT Core Framework, the explicit role of the mentor creates a new expectation and for some schools a change in the role of the placement mentor. As well as managing the administration systems expected of the school, mentor and trainee, they will need to be providing specific training to meet the needs of the Framework.

The delivery and quality assurance of this training will provide a challenge for the ITT provider and may then mean a change in the mentoring contract between all stakeholders.

In the table on the following page, the elements of the framework relating to the role of the mentor have been extracted to shape the scope of the challenge facing ITT providers, partnership schools and the placement mentors.

Teaching Standard	**Receiving clear, consistent and effective mentoring to ensure that by the end of the QTS stage trainees can:**
1	• *create a culture of respect and trust in the classroom that supports all pupils to succeed (e.g. by modelling the types of courteous behaviour expected of pupils).*
2	• *take into account pupils' prior knowledge when planning how much new information to introduce.*
3	• *identify essential concepts, knowledge, skills and principles of the subject.*
4	• *provide scaffolds for pupil talk to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue.*
5	• *supporting pupils with a range of additional needs, including how to use the SEND Code of Practice, which provides additional guidance on supporting pupils with SEND effectively.*
6	• *structure tasks and questions to enable the identification of knowledge gaps and misconceptions (e.g. by using common misconceptions within multiple-choice questions).* • *scaffold self-assessment by sharing model work with pupils, highlighting key details.* • *record data only when it is useful for improving pupil outcomes.*
7	• *respond quickly to any behaviour or bullying that threatens emotional safety.*
8	• *engage in professional development with clear intentions for impact on pupil outcomes, sustained over time with built-in opportunities for practice.* • *duties relating to Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards.* • *work closely with the SENCO and other professionals supporting pupils with additional needs, including how to make explicit links between interventions delivered outside of lessons with classroom teaching.* • *share the intended lesson outcomes with teaching assistants ahead of lessons.* • *ensure that support provided by teaching assistants in lessons is additional to, rather than a replacement for, support from the teacher.*

Table 1 Extracts from ITT Core content of note for ITT mentors

The qualitative standards outlined in the table above will mean that the placement mentor will be expected to co-deliver part of a core curriculum. This must be taken into account by the placement school when allocating time for the mentoring role.

The additional challenge for the training provider is that the rationale and sequencing of the training delivered by the placement mentor needs to be understood by all stakeholders and adhered to.

In conclusion

The CPD for placement mentors is going to be a key challenge for the implementation of the new core framework. The Quality of Education and Training judgement within the new Ofsted Inspection framework for ITE [5]. Without clear processes to ensure that the training element of the ITT Core Framework is being delivered to the same high standards as the central training, this element may be the chink in the armour for all providers.

References

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-core-content-framework

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-early-career-teachers

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-strategy

[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536891/Mentor_standards_report_Final.pdf

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An Alien Act, a Hoover and No Socks!

A think piece working paper by David Gumbell

The man who connects all three things was a man who you have most likely heard of, his name was Albert Einstein.

Renowned scientist and Nobel Prize winner in 1921 - for his services to Theoretical Physics, Albert Einstein is instantly recognisable by his dishevelled white hair and matching bushy moustache. This iconic image of him in his late 60s, some 20 years after his accolade, is so widely distributed that it would be hard not to connect the two. Yet who knows more than just what he looked like along with that just-as-notorious equation, more of which will come later.

12 years later, just before Einstein was planning to return to America for the third time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began to get suspicious of what he was up to and started a dossier on him. As the 'evidence' built up, the director at the time, a certain, J Edgar **Hoover**, recommended that he was not to be allowed to return to US soil. The state department overruled this suggestion, despite the director referring (according to the National Geographic) to the '**Alien** Exclusion Act' of the time.

However, it may also have been because of his political views and his support for groups that had strong opinions on Cold War collaborations; his encouragement, via a letter to none other than President Roosevelt about the development of the Atomic Bomb; or maybe, because he was a prominent supporter of Zionism?

But what about that equation: $\mathbf{E = mc^2}$

Do you know what the **E** stands for? Usually it is (**E**)nergy which makes sense. As does (**m**)ass the weight of the object in question. However, the most powerful (as a result of it being squared) of these letters, **c** scuppers most hopeful pseudo-scientists. You can understand where that confusion stems from as it is the speed of light, so why a **c**? There are two reasons that the speed of light is a (**c**). One suggests that '**c**' stands for "(**c**)eleritas" meaning "speed" in Latin; the other frontrunner for **c** is (**c**)onstant. Which do you think is right?

Part of the lasting appeal of this equation is the fact that it simplifies a very complex concept in a rather under-complicated way. In many ways, the elegant simplicity of the formula can be adapted to work with

mentorship too. All you need to do is to change what the letters stand for and adapt to our understanding of the importance of value ‘c’.

The ‘E’ for example, can be associated with the student’s (E)xperience. How does the feedback feel to them as the receiver? This can be the judgement, the target, the areas of improvement. At the end of the day, the mentor may have intended something very different from what is heard by the student teacher. Good intention and required outcomes don't always follow suit, do they? This may, at times, feel alien to the mentor as they believe that their greater experience of teaching, has been passed on. However, by acting in a certain way, it has made the early career teacher overly negative or, indeed, unjustly positive (if the difficult conversation, was sidestepped).

The ‘m’ of mass could be simply (m)entoring itself, but just as a definition shouldn't contain a defined word within it, so an equation for mentoring shouldn't include that the value of ‘m’ for ‘mentoring’. For me, it's about ‘making time’. By giving the time that is needed to fully engage, important matters arise. All too often, with time as such a precious commodity in schools, the process can be curtailed or too frequently cancelled as ‘other things come up’. Or maybe the paperwork needs to be completed first, yet that takes up much of the allotted time given over to the ‘weekly mentor meeting’. If adopting a coaching approach to feedback, this will inevitably lead to an increase in time taken to reach a particular goal, or endpoint. After all, it is so much quicker to simply give the answer, than to draw it out. Again, if time is limited, then the temptation is always there to press the fast-forward button and to skip ‘the chat’.

So that just leaves, ‘**c**’, and the importance of ‘**c**’ it that it is magnified by being the squared number and thus multiplied by itself. In too many cases, I feel that c stands for (**c**)orrection, and the need to make changes to the current practice. Mentors use phrases such as ‘Even better if…’ or ‘It was good; however, you could have…’ The timing, and balance of using such phrases is the gift of good mentor.

What I feel would be more beneficial (and indeed, a higher order of mentoring) is for the ‘**c**’ to stand for ‘**c**onnection’. The ability to connect between one human being and another; for the power balance between the two to be minimised so that genuine connection can develop, evolve and be nurtured. Only when the primary conditions are met, can we possibly expect our words to be listened to, assimilated, and for any advice given to be accepted and implemented in the classroom the following day.

Once these basic needs are met, the subsequent professional dialogue can be informed, relatable and ultimately effective. Any feedback offered in these conditions is most likely to achieve the desired outcome and contribute to making a difference to the current practice to the less experienced practitioner.

- *So why are we not as good as we should be in this regard?*

- *Why are some mentors better at it than others?*

- *Where do you sit on this 'scale of connect' that I am provoking you to consider here?*

Partly, I think there is a vulnerability needed to connect authentically to another human being; yet this may require the mentor to dig deep into their values of humility and generosity – fostering an 'equal power balance' between mentor and student. When mentors listen deeply, and authentically connect with their mentees, a rich learning experience may just happen for both professionals.

Secondly, there is a necessary confidence in the mentor, in knowing that they will get to the same outcome, but in a meandering way, rather than the prescribed route, signposted by ticking off the teacher standards on their paperwork. Again, in a desire to 'do the right thing', the mentor may feel partially, or fully limited, and thus not read the situation and trust their instinct to do what is best for that student teacher, in that space, at that time.

Finally, there is a tendency that we want all teachers to teach in the same way. That there is somehow a formula for teachers that just needs someone to complete; the numbers to go into this equation and a certain number comes out. But is teaching about constants, or inevitable randomness?

- *Do we celebrate differences between different teaching styles, or is there a 'preferred type' in school?*

- *Would we applaud the non-sock wearing teacher (the one that is innovative, different and brave), or not?*

- *And, now that you have read this article, would you (c)onnect with Einstein, before you (c)orrected his rather quirky, dishevelled fashion sense?*

Just like the infamous equation of $E=mc^2$ is elegant in its simplicity, I propose that mentoring is too. Not as an equation, more an unassuming phrase: 'Connect, before you correct'. Try it, I think that its simplicity belies its complexity.

PGCE Mentor Training: Is our current model fit for purpose? Exploring the opinions of PGCE School Direct Initial Teacher Training Mentors

A research working paper by Sharron Galley

This small-scale research project arose from the differing standards of mentorship that the Ashton Sixth Form College (ASFC) School Direct PGCE trainees were receiving. The project and subsequent results (a poster presentation) were discussed and presented within the College's Research Ed CPD sessions.

Introduction, Context and Rationale for the research:

The Carter Review (2015) states clearly that mentors play a crucial and central role in supporting the development and training of ITT trainees. Indeed, without the support of school-based mentors, ITT provision would cease to exist. Therefore, as a School Direct provider, it is imperative that the Primary and Secondary subject leads at ASFC provide appropriate and meaningful training to the school-based subject and professional mentors.

This small-scale research project aims to investigate the effectiveness of our current provision through seeking the opinions of our current mentors and to find ways of increasing the attendance of the training. Depending on the findings, changes to the current model will be made before the next round of mentor training begins in July 2019.

ASFC has provided Primary and Secondary PGCE (with QTS) programmes since September 2016 (in partnership with Staffordshire University). All trainees need to spend at least 120 days in a school setting (in at least 2 separate schools).

Many of the partner schools are experienced with supporting trainees and provide excellent mentorship. However, this is not always the case, and some PGCE trainees have reported varying standards of support and knowledge from their subject and professional mentors. All mentors are invited to attending mentor training at ASFC, prior to their mentee joining the setting but not all attend.

The current mentor training is delivered by the ASFC primary and secondary subject leads and follows the Staffordshire University model – which provides an outline of the PGCE programme and explains the paperwork requirements.

Within the academic year 2018/2019, more structured approaches to supporting struggling trainees were introduced by the programme lead in order to highlight the trainee's development needs earlier in the course. This support included earlier target-setting and more frequent placement visits by the PGCE programme lead for struggling trainees (following an interim grading by the mentor). These new approaches resulted in 96% of trainees needing no additional support in the final half term of their placement, which is a significant increase on the academic year 2017/2018 where 54% of trainees needed no additional support.

On reflection, it could be more productive to train mentors (before the trainee begins placement) in how to identify the signs of a failing trainee and to also introduce the mentors to the paperwork and procedures that could be put into place to support the trainee.

Summary of Key Literature:

The Carter Review of ITT (2015) highlights the need for the profile of mentors to be raised by recommending that a set of non-statutory standards should be developed to ensure a more consistent approach to school-based mentoring and to contribute to the culture of coaching and mentoring in schools.

Green (2017) argues that ITT only works well when the trainee and mentor have clear roles and responsibilities. This relationship then enables pupils' learning and progress.

Lofthouse (2018), however, acknowledges that not all mentoring relationships are positive. Mentors can be too busy to go beyond the required mentor meetings, lesson observations and feedback, tracking and target-setting (Lofthouse and Thomas, 2014). Wilson (2014) goes on to explain that mentors can be anxious about whether a trainee teacher might interrupt progress of classes for which the mentor has ultimate responsibility

Methodology and findings:

The research was based on a two-phase, mixed method design where online questionnaires collected a mix of quantitative and qualitative data on mentor's views of the ASFC mentor training they had received. Subsequently, qualitative data was collected using unstructured interviews with a sub-sample of teacher-mentors to gain further insights. After gathering the primary data, a system of coding and theming was used in order to explore the research question.

Newby (2010) highlights the fact that an evaluative researcher is not detached from the research, and therefore, there are issues of bias to consider. I was aware that as a teacher on the course, I should be fully

prepared for any criticism that the mentors may direct at me and this criticism should be acknowledged honestly when presenting the data rather than being ignored. Newby also explains that within evaluative research there are limited perspectives presented of the issues, which I acknowledge to be the case in this project. However, I believe that the mentors' views and opinions will be heard all the more strongly for there not being multiple different perspectives included in the research.

Questionnaire results:

The response-rate to the online questionnaires was low with only 8 out of 26 mentors responding. Hunter (2012) explained that whilst online questionnaires are quick to create and cheap to distribute, response rates can be low. On reflection, discussing the questionnaires with mentors beforehand might have produced a better response rate. However, I was able to see that the main reasons for mentors not attending was due to time constraints rather than not attending due to having mentored before.

What were the reasons for you not attending the mentor training?

- Had a meeting with a parent that could not be missed.
- Timing of the training
- OFSTED
- Attended the training 2 times previously however the mentor training coincided with SATS meetings and moderation training.
- Full day and evening classes

Semi-structured interviews*:*

Two primary mentors (K and L) and one secondary subject mentor (S) were asked for their views on the ASFC mentor training provision through semi-structured interviews. Their responses were digitally recorded for accuracy. The primary mentors were interviewed face to face and the secondary mentor over the telephone.

Cohen et al (2018) warn researchers that an interviewer may be seeking answers to support her preconceived notions or theory. Therefore, the interviewees were all asked three open questions that gave them the opportunity to explain their opinions to explain what worked well and what could be improved regarding the mentor training they had received. Due to the informal approach to the interviews, the mentors were forthcoming with their views and proposed some changes to the training that had not previously been considered, such as including a 'trouble-shooting' section where mentors can be better informed on what to do if their trainee

is struggling with their responsibilities or not engaging with the placement procedures.

The semi-structured interviews proved to be more insightful than the online questionnaires.

Summary of findings:

The interviews with mentors were useful and highlighted clear aspects of the current training model that could be improved.
The Carter Review (2015) recommended that non- statutory Mentor Standards be introduced. By having a set of standards to underpin the role of the mentor, consistency and more awareness of the key aspects of the role can be introduced into their training. The three interviewed mentors were keen for this to happen with Teachers K and L explaining that this will make the role of the mentor clearer.
The Role of the Mentor needs to be more firmly established within their training according to Teachers S, K and L. Lofthouse (2018) discussed the varying standards of mentors and teacher trainees have also discussed this with me within tutorials. Teacher L said that the provider's expectations of the mentor need to be clear and that signing the 'Mentor Agreement' could go some way to making the expectations more clear and there being more consistency.

Recommendations for future practice:

- Training to be more focussed on the 'Role of the Mentor' rather than on the paperwork
- Training to include more discussion on what mentors should do if their trainee is struggling
- A 'Mentor Agreement' to be signed by mentors
- The Mentor training should be shared with the teacher trainees so they are aware of what is discussed
- Trainees to meet with mentors before September to agree roles and responsibilities

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Mentoring – A whole school role or the whole school's responsibility?

A Think Piece Working Paper by Henry Sauntson

3000 years ago Telemachus had an advisor – Homer called him Mentor. This person's purpose was to offer advice to the younger man; we have the prefix 'men' to indicate that there is a connection with the art of thinking – mentors support and enable thought. Thinking is evaluative and reflective, and memory is the 'residue of thought' (Willingham 2009); can we therefore argue that the role of the mentor is to facilitate deeper consideration of one's own practices and in doing so improve them? For the purposes of this argument I use the word mentor to mean 'designated colleague with a responsibility to support, monitor and enable development' (my definition) – if this approach includes aspects of separately defined 'coaching' then so be it. According to Weston & Clay in their excellent 'Unleashing Great Teaching', the aim of the mentor is to move the mentee 'from being a complete novice to attaining some level of expertise'. This is all well and good but indicates through inference that the mentor is simply a role undertaken to foster a novice, a fledgling. They continue by suggesting that there needs to be a 'gradual shift from a modelled and exemplified approach' to a point where the mentee has greater self-regulation and reflective ability. In 1977 Malcolm Knowles explored and expanded upon the concept of 'andragogy' – the teaching of adults. He argued that the 'andragogue' has a value system that places self-directiveness on a much higher level than dependency and so will do everything one can to help a learner become increasingly self-directive in his or her learning. In essence, the definition of the Mentor. Mentorship therefore could be seen as the teaching of adults; as a school has a duty to teach a large body of students (pedagogy) so too has it a duty to make better its adults – the teaching body. If all staff were more skilled in the complimentary art of Andragogy then there is development across two fronts – more teachers helping more teachers get better at teaching and in doing so improving outcomes for students.

The new EPI report (2020) into the effects of Professional Development for teachers on student outcomes reveals positive figures - +0.09. The report also highlights that good professional development increases retention which in itself helps build consistency within a school setting. Contrast the effect size with

that of comprehensive school reform models (between 0.1 and 0.2) and we see that professional development is as effective as any major landscape shift, and yet schools find it difficult to embrace and retain suitable, effective and iterative models of PD that have lasting impact.

What better way to run iterative professional development than through a system of mentor development for all staff? Mentors are essential (and compulsory at ITT) for the development of Early-Career teachers and yet there are many conflicting factors with regards to their development, not least the value of the role in the whole-school framework. Mentors should be shaping whole-school culture but more often than not they are a product of it, and this is turn feeds down to those whom they are mentoring; trainees and NQTs become products of an institution or a MAT and not perhaps a free spirit in the world of education; they are unintentionally institutionalised.

If we were to shift the focus from the role of the individual mentor to the responsibility of the school to develop as a supportive environment for professional development we create a raft of staff ready and capable to take on the mentoring role when the need arises, as well as fostering an ethos of collaborative improvement and development. Schools often find themselves in difficult and potentially compromising situations where they have employed or taken on an ECT but cannot fully meet the necessary mentor demands – subject-specific, lack of timetable availability et al – so the new teacher lacks the required and essential support to develop in their role effectively, and is thus denied their right to grow and flourish. If they feel unsupported they move on, no matter how fledgling their career. Mentoring can have impact – Ingersoll and Strong (2011) show us that they can help enable specific teaching practices and retain teachers in the profession (ideas supported by Kraft & Papay among others) but we have to pay attention to their use and their appropriate training. We all want better teachers – more effective teachers help improve student outcomes – but to become better teachers the very nature of the induction and mentoring in the early stages needs to be of high quality. Langdon et al (2019) cite that 'professional development for mentors needs to be mandatory' and that 'for [..] mentoring to have a positive impact it needs to be premised on all stakeholders in the school community being learners – including leaders. Expectations need to be explicit; aimed at harnessing the capacity of all to participate on a range of formal and informal levels.' I feel we need to be looking at a whole-school model of mentor development to help not only foster an ethos of supportive professionalism but also to ensure the

presence of suitably trained staff in all areas should the need (and therefore the duty) arise.

The Carter Review into ITT providers (2015) stated that mentors need to be 'excellent teachers who can both articulate and demonstrate outstanding practice'; surely the goal for all institutions is to have as many of these as possible? If the role of the mentor is seen as integral to the quality development of teaching & learning interactions then the strength of the professional development programme within the school can be augmented by adding mentoring in; Kraft and Papay (2018) state that 'working conditions in schools [are] much stronger predictors of teachers' career plans than were the demographic characteristics of students in these schools' and so when the focus of the working conditions is built around mutual support and development retention of quality grows.

School leaders have a duty – moral and ethical, for we are dealing with human beings who in turn have an impact on other human beings – to ensure mentorship is available, and that that mentorship is formative, supportive and committed. The role of the mentor is one of leadership, but leadership perhaps more of potential than proven ability; that needs careful management.

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 (2013) refers to as 'judgementoring'. He 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.' Surely then we have a duty to equip all teachers with ability to be a high quality, objective mentor; one who enables development but does not hinder it with their own subjective judgements or perception. If the mentor support is widely available the possibility of one set of skewed comments (however meaningful the intent) being the basis on which development is grounded is mitigated against. Now, certainly, this has implications for communication and clarity but when the approach is universal and the vision and culture fit for all the end goal is clear for everyone; success can only be achieved if we know what it looks like! That goal must also avoid being one of an 'institutionalized' nature, but one of

collaborative drive towards the common goal of effective teaching that focuses on pedagogical principles and application.

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' and that these programmes should break away from the confines of merely ITT and NQT frameworks but 'should develop mentors' knowledge and critical understanding of theoretical models and frameworks of mentoring as well as the generic principles underpinning effective practice'. They point out also though that problem of value of the professional learning within the institution to allow proper engagement and reflection – mentors 'need to be provided with the conditions and resources within their schools/colleges that allow them to be actively involved in the construction and extension of their knowledge base as mentors. Only then will their practice bear the hallmarks of professionalism'. If these conditions underpin the very nature of the professional learning curriculum planned by the school then the environment is at its most conducive for development of all.

Research from the Sutton Trust in 2011 showed the significant impact the effectiveness of a teacher has on student progress - +1.5 months compared to +0.5, and this trend continues when we consider how a stable environment is a positive aspect for a student and a teacher – Kraft and Papay (2017) show us the quality of the professional environment having a 40% greater impact on student outcomes over time; support the teachers, help them grow, improve outcomes for students. They focus too on environment: 'In supportive schools, teachers not only tend to say and be more effective in their classrooms, but they also improve at much greater rates over time'. 'Some teachers are dramatically more effective than others' (Duckworth et al 2009) but, with a clear, focussed and iterative programme of professional learning that puts the support and management of others at the heart, allowing us as teachers to hold 'the mirror up to nature', as it were, then we become more reflective, more evaluative and more effective ourselves.

Helen Timperley (2008) states that 'Professional learning is strongly shaped by the context in which the teacher practises. This is usually the classroom, which, in turn, is strongly influenced by the wider school culture and the community and society in which the school is situated. Teachers' daily experiences in their practice context shape their understandings, and their understandings shape their experiences.' She

goes on to remind us of the need for iterative, supported and sustained programmes: 'teachers need extended time in which to learn and change', 'to understand how existing beliefs and practices are different from those being promoted, to build the required pedagogical content knowledge, and to change practice. Timperley again: 'Time, however, is not a sufficient condition for change: teachers also need to have their current practice challenged and to be supported as they make changes'. That challenge and support can come from the shared vision and the mutual drive towards higher standards.

In their excellent book The Teacher Gap, Rebecca Allen and Sam Sims rightly synthesize the argument that the best schools with the best working conditions have the least need to recruit new trainees or NQTs as they have high levels of retention. So, is being put in charge of an ITT trainee or an NQT a mark of shame? An admittance that the school needs to develop its teaching quality but can't lure in or retain the experience? Perhaps, especially if there are a lot of mentors required – this places demands on timetables and department resources. However, if a school wants a lot of trainees – perhaps to rebuild or to develop or grow – then it needs to find ways to support the mentoring process, however they choose to do so. Mentors must feel they are valued; they must be given time, space and support. In essence, becoming a mentor is the first step to becoming a leader of professional learning – you are supporting a teacher to get better and in doing so becoming better yourself. Mentoring is the finest example of mutual CPD, whatever model you or your institution choose to follow.

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'; I feel this should be a whole-school approach. By adopting a more supportive ethos to the development of all teacher sit is a natural result that all teachers become better andragogues themselves, using their own empathetic experience and – above all, humility – to help guide and shape future teachers. Hobson also calls for 'realization of a number of conditions for successful mentoring, such as the effective selection and preparation of mentors'; the stronger the overall development of staff the wider the pool of availability for selecting the most appropriate mentor to meet the needs of each individual trainee or qualified staff member.

We know from the Sutton Trust that from great teachers we get better student outcomes. Good mentors are expected to be great teachers, and they too are helping shape more great teachers in their own ways. Mentorship is also mutual CPD, promoting reflection, evaluation and articulation of pedagogy at every opportunity. If we understand also that the best CPD is iterative and supported with a domain-specific approach (EEF, TDT) then we can argue that teaching the art of the mentor is the best sort of professional development a school can provide!

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Volunteering as a mentor with MCR Pathways

A practice insight working paper by Helen McLaren

Introduction

My role in this mentoring relationship was as a volunteer mentor with a young person in a Glasgow secondary school. I had mentored this young person for 4 years with MCR Pathways. MCR Pathways was set up to provide mentoring for looked after children in Scotland to help close the attainment gap and focus specifically on looked after children, who have lower rates of going into employment, training or further/higher education.

I met with the client on average once per month in the school. Our final year of working together was June 2018.

At the point of signing up to MCR Pathways I gave a commitment that I would work with the mentee for a minimum of one year, which involved meeting for at least one hour per week. I believe that this initial commitment for the first year is important in working with looked after children.

I took the approach of not looking at, or delving into, where the client has come from, their background or past issues and this was fundamental in working with the client. The client reinforced this approach by telling me that she appreciated me not asking about her past.

Reason client came for mentoring

This client volunteered to be part of a mentoring programme when it was first offered within her school. The client had ambitions regarding her career, and she believed that she required help in achieving her goals. This was the initial focus of discussion at the early meetings.

During the early discussions, it became clear that the client was an ambitious individual who had set herself stretching, and achievable, goals relating to her academic achievements. At this point it appeared that the presenting issue was for her to get help with her career ambitions. No discussion at this early point was around confidence.

As our relationship grew, I sensed that the client struggled with self-confidence. However, it seemed apparent through our discussions that there was an inner confidence within the client, although she appeared to lack faith in herself to allow this to come to the fore. As the relationship developed the client revealed that she wanted help with her confidence which she believed was lacking and held her back from progressing and expressed a concern that this could become more of an issue for her.

I considered that the clients' self-acknowledged lack of confidence could be a challenge. From the beginning of this mentoring relationship it been crucial for me to create a 'haven' which I believe was essential in gaining the client's trust and acceptance. It appeared to me that trust and respect are very important to this client and she disclosed to me, during our first introductory meeting, that she has a good sense of whether someone will ''stick around' and ''be there for the right reasons''. The client and I built up a trusting, respectful relationship from the beginning and that continued throughout.

Final year of mentoring

The client was at a crucial stage in school in her final year and faced many options and decisions regarding her next steps. All the work done with her in the past has been about building foundations to reach the point in determining her future, and help her achieve her academic, and ultimately, career goals. Up until this point we had discussed and considered many options.

I had been constantly encouraging self-management and ownership with this client, continually re-evaluating her goals and providing ongoing, flexible support to allow her to achieve these goals. As a result, I watched her grow and be empowered to explore more options, both on her own and during our sessions.

Counselling interaction segment

This segment captures well and condenses the work carried out until this point and helped her focus on reaching a decision

Myself: In our previous session we spoke about the importance of having specific goals to allow you to identify what your next steps are to help you in achieving these objectives. We discussed the importance of setting goals which are specific and measurable, are achievable, realistic and time bound, in other words SMART goals. We agreed that you would research further universities which offer the subject areas that you are interested in to allow you to narrow down some of your options. We also discussed Modern Apprenticeships and you were also going to explore this area. How your research is going and what you have gained from this?

Client: I have researched the 2 areas that we discussed i.e. looking at Modern Apprenticeships and universities offering the courses I'm interested in. I am still a little confused as to what area I should pursue as, at this stage, a Modern Apprenticeship is appealing. However, I am also keen to fully explore university as an option.

Myself: I understand that this is a confusing, perhaps stressful time for you. It is an important stage in your final school year, and I know that you want to make the right, informed decision. Perhaps we can look at the 2 areas, i.e. Modern Apprenticeships and going to university and what you've found that may help you identify which area would be most beneficial for you to achieve your career goals. We can also revisit your original goals and why these goals are important to you.

Client: Yes, I do feel a bit stressed about it and feel that I need to decide soon, as there is a deadline to apply for university. I have been thinking a lot about this and, as you know, going to university has always been something which I've been keen to achieve and I would be the first person in my family to do this, and I know that this would make my family proud. However, the Modern Apprenticeship route is also appealing as it would mean I would be gaining a qualification while earning a wage at the same time.

Evaluation: I can sense that this is a challenging area and decision for the client. The client was able to convey succinctly to me why she is confused as to what area she should pursue. I also sense that she is conflicted in achieving her own goals but balancing this with what would make her family proud.

Final critical evaluation

Since the interaction detailed above, the client has moved forward with her goals, achieving a place at university

I learned early on working with my client, and through self-awareness, that I would not have all the answers, skills or experience to help the client in every situation. To ensure the best possible outcome for my client, I was able to bring in various people who could further help my client with her goals. This approach has proved crucial in working with my client who has now been introduced to several contacts in my network, leading her to gain invaluable work experience in her chosen area in the creative industries.

With this client there have been examples of situations that we have both experienced, such as, the desire to leave school before finishing the final year. I could draw on my own experience, share this with my mentee and allow her to come to a decision as to whether leaving school early for her would be beneficial. I was critically aware that I should not enforce my own experience or try and solve this dilemma for her.

I found that by sharing, and reflecting on some of my own past experiences, which are relevant to my mentee, has helped me to be more aware and to understand why I made certain decisions regarding leaving school early and subsequent career decisions.

My formal mentoring relationship with this client through MCR Pathways ended in June 2018 and at that point in our relationship my client and I discussed the 'ending' of our formal relationship and the next informal stage as she continues to progress in her life. We discussed the progress the client has made and how she will take this onto the next exciting stage of her life. I believe that at the point we 'ended' the mentoring relationship my client and I were looking forward to a progressive future.

I am fully aware of the privilege that I have had in mentoring this client.

The Genes in the DNA of Coaching within Education.

A practice insight paper by Daniel Duke

What is the lived experience of a group of Early Career Teachers, as they engage in a developmental culture of coaching and mentoring, at a large general FE college, in the north of England?

It is common for teachers within FE to make the transition into teaching from an industrial or commercial background, subsequently they bring with them a wealth of prior knowledge and skills, meaning that each person is unique as they embark on their teaching careers. This diversity creates a curious challenge, as a one-size fits all process of initial teacher training is often inapt and warrants further exploration to ensure that these teachers can rapidly develop their own agency. As early career teachers embark on a career within FE the support and guidance that they receive within their institutions is often informal, the quality of this support is inconsistent and frequently amorphous.

It is widely believed that coaching, which is employed as a facilitated, dialogic, reflective process, that supports a sustainable change in behaviours or cognition is especially useful as a developmental tool and can be constructively applied to the development of teachers as a humanistic performance enhancing art form. Mentoring in education often has the dual aims of personal support and professional learning, this is because the mentee receives assistance to assimilate into their new role as well as to develop instructional skills within the educational setting. These means of supporting teachers have been used, albeit intervallic, for many years but only in recent years have colleges and schools started to fully embrace the potential of these praxis, leading to a plethora of contemporary models of support and development being implemented throughout all levels of education.

My current role as a Teaching and Learning Coach in a large FE college, warrants that I work with numerous groups of teaching staff across a broad range of specialisms. Initially in preparation for this study, I considered designing an action research project as a compelling form of professional inquiry, based upon my own perspectives. This might have embraced a humanistic approach to investigate the intrinsic motivators of self-esteem and desire for personal accomplishment, along with the effects of positive reinforcement as an extrinsic influence to develop changes in behaviour. This approach could have added to the

existing body of educational research surrounding coaching as a process or its potential to develop people within education. The present body of research makes confident, bold claims concerning the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring; however, this is predominantly situated alongside the wider concept of support and development, which presently appears to be objectively abstract and most often it relates to the what or how of coaching. Therefore, the foremost inquiry is bounded towards the mechanism and potential impacts of coaching, along with the sentiments of the coach or mentor. Whilst this current body of research is unquestionably extensive and unmeasurably fascinating, it is deficient to fully progress our knowledge of coaching as a developmental practice that crucially is done co-constructively with a coachee. Consequently, the evident void within the current research is the substantial consideration of the perspective and lived experience of the teachers as a coachee, particularly the teachers who are within the early stages of their careers within FE.

It is this latter deliberation that captivates my own deep curiosity and formed the critical basis of this study to explore the genuine intrigue of the direct 'lived experience' of a group of teachers who are in the early stages of their teaching careers, as they engage with support and development through coaching and mentoring. These deliberations led to the construction of a study with an interpretivist approach, this allowed the examination of how the group of early career teachers experience their world rather than the exploration of any a priori preconceptions, assumptions, notions and convictions.

The intention for this study resisted the temptation to use this specific enquiry as a coaching episode, however, by designing and implementing this enquiry as tool, it is now obvious to see how an enquiry led process could be applied further in a model of universal support for all teaching staff members, regardless of their experience as a teacher or individual agency. The useful instruments of 'enablers' (Timperley, 2015) to facilitate professional conversations, paired with 'Time to Think' methods (Kline, 2002) provides the space for people to critically explore their own cognition, beyond superficial perceptions, leading to profound comprehensions, which sit at the very core of their struggles. Additionally, this provides the opportunity to discover the implications of the 'struggles' that these teachers face, this is significant, as if the undoubtable aim is to develop individual agency with these teachers, it is fundamental to find the root cause of their problems.

This enquiry succeeded in providing a critical insight to the daily perceptions and experiences of the group. Inherent to their experiences, is the expression of meanings

given to the incidents that are encountered, where language generates 'thick descriptions' of individual perspectives along with the social and cultural situatedness of actions and interactions to associate shared meanings.

Through a critical lens it was possible to identify five common themes, throughout the study, which related to how the group perceive and experience their world. Allowing these Teachers time to reflect and explore what it is really like to engage in a developmental and supportive process, they discuss their feelings and beliefs, professional values, relationships, socio-economic influences, but most critically their struggles. Whilst they identify reflection, development of practice and council as the mechanisms they used to provide this insight. These themes broadly align and support the current body of literature from the organisational or coach's perspective but more importantly gives a voice to the coachees.

Intriguingly, where early career teachers can cultivate their approaches, perceptions, behaviours or 'agency' in a safe and trusting environment, trusting relationships form and appear as the first imperative link in the chain for coaching and mentoring to be utilised as a change agent.

Where the early career teachers feel that they are isolated, they are evidently struggling.

Additionally, a culture which fosters a togetherness by being inclusive, expansive, reflective and collaborative, materialises as the second fundamental criterion for these early career teachers to integrate into their milieus.

Where they feel valued and integrated into their own teams, they truly believe that they can succeed.

Most significantly, as Trust and Culture materialise as the genes in the DNA of coaching within education, the overarching sentiment of this study is that, coaching which has a genuine regard to support and develop people in an open, transparent an co-constructive manner, has the exponential ability to be a powerful change agent.

In short, to this group of early career teachers, coaching and mentoring matters… a lot.

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Who cares? The role of teacher voice in pedagogical relationships

A research working paper by Victoria Wasner

Abstract

Experienced teachers in schools are often left out of discussions regarding mentors. Having established themselves within the profession, and having proved themselves capable of managing classrooms, developing curriculum and building up positive relationships with their students, it can all too easily be assumed that these teachers do not need a helping hand and an open ear to help them through times of transition and change. Perhaps teachers change roles within the course of their career, perhaps their line managers and members of leadership change, or perhaps they decide to improve their practice and contribute to the field of educational research by embarking on further education awards alongside their teaching roles. Such experiences are not without their ups and downs; they can certainly be unsettling, disorientating and lead to a feeling of having lost one's voice. This is where a mentor is sorely needed. This contribution to the collection 'Mentors Matter' proposes that in order for teachers for be able to weather the storm of change, instability and in some cases a personal transformation as a result of academic engagement and inquiry, access to a 'caring' mentor should be normal practice. This will be discussed in light of empirical research conducted by the author as part of her doctoral inquiry, and a revisited framework for a *Pedagogy of CARE* will be introduced. The author believes that certain principles and attributes belong to such a framework that foregrounds voice and an act of 'care'.

...nothing is important unless the difference that it makes is an important one

(Frankfurt 1988, p. 82)

Has anyone seen my voice?

This piece is about voice. It is about what happens when you feel you don't have one. It is about only realising that you should have one when you become aware of the fact that you don't. I have been a secondary teacher for the past seventeen years, and only now I am wondering where my voice went. Only now I am feeling alone. Only now I am missing what it feels like to not only be heard, but to be listened to. Only now I am aware of just

how much mentors matter; not only for teachers new to the profession, but to those of us who have been here a while. Is there anyone there who cares? Is anyone listening?

Having the courage to love and to listen

One of the things that I have come to realise as a result of the process of my own doctoral inquiry and how I now feel teaching on the other side of its completion, is that 'care' is in fact fundamental to the structures, relationships and processes within schools and within teacher professional development, be those student - student, student - teacher, teacher - teacher, teacher - supervisor or teacher - leader. I would like to go so far as to talk about these relationships as an act of love, where love is a mode of caring (Frankfurt 1999; 2004); in our practice we find ourselves in a *relational* pedagogy in which our actions are given a direction and in which the actors are 'linked together through a pedagogical dialogue characterised by horizontal and dialogical relationships' (Fischmann 2009, p. 236). Such a pedagogy allows voices to emerge through a process of listening that is open, intentional and responsive. One is not simply given the opportunity to be heard, as part of a 'functionalist' (Fielding and Moss 2011) process of 'box-ticking', or meeting some 'capitalist-friendly' (McClaren, 2005), performative agenda of voice provision for teachers and students. Rather, such listening is based on what Fielding (2014; 2016) calls 'democratic fellowship'; an 'insistence on the necessity of human significance' (2014, p.517), where a 'dialogue of love' emerges from 'an act of daring, of courage, of critical reflection' (McClaren 2005, xxx). If we re-imagine the relationship between a teacher and their mentor, what could this kind of dialogue look like?

In order to address this question, this article draws on a framework for a *Pedagogy of CARE* that was developed as a result of my doctoral inquiry. However, due to the short but seemingly profound distance that now lies between the process of my data analysis, the creation of my framework, and the continuation of my teaching practice since completing my doctorate, I have begun to see this framework in different ways. At the time of our inquiry, and during the process of analysing and presenting the data as it was emerging, my preoccupation had been with *student* voice; what I had not predicted however was that the process would lead me to an eventual understanding of the necessary principles and attributes for participants in *all* collaborative relationships in schools. Writing this contribution after some time having tried to introduce the framework within the

context of my school has allowed me the opportunity to step into very different shoes than the ones that I was wearing whilst pursuing my doctoral inquiry. Through reflecting on the framework, I realise, with the simultaneous loss of my voice, that it is applicable to *teacher* voice just as much as it is to student voice. Within the context of why *mentors* matter, revisiting the framework allows me to reimagine what 'caring' relationships between a teacher and their mentor could look like if the principles and attributes within the framework were acted upon. I wonder if, were that to be the case, I would be able to find my voice. At this point in time, I also find myself longing for the relationship that I had with my doctoral supervisor. She had the courage to care. She knew how to help me find my voice in a world of academia and practice in which I felt I was faltering. She knew what it meant to be a mentor.

The emergence of CARE: Team 'Change-Makers' inquiry

Over the course of one academic year, I spent time as a practitioner-researcher alongside a group of seven high school girls in grade 11 (16-17 years old) who had responded to an appeal to their grade to take part in my proposed 'Team Change-Makers' inquiry project. Influenced by my convictions about a methodology that provided for student voice (Mockler and Groundwater-Smith, 2015) and a practice that is driven by principles of democratic purpose and social justice (Cochrane-Smith and Lytle, 2009), my intention was to act as a teacher research partner to the students, in which I would mentor them throughout our inquiry journey, and in which we would all endeavour to act according to agreed ethical collaborative principles, or 'rules of engagement' that we drew up together.

The topic area for our research was *service learning;* a 'research based' approach to community service activities, connecting what is learnt in the classroom with the needs of a particular community (IBO 2015, p. 20). Service learning was something that was being developed at the school, and something in which the girls and I were all engaged, for example through a 'Personal Development Week' (PDW) in which we all travelled to various locations across the globe to 'help' other communities, or through the 'service' component of their International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme's (IBDP) *Creativity, Activity and Service* (CAS) component (IBO 2015). My role at the time was CAS Coordinator at an international school in Switzerland, so the inquiry was

situated firmly in my own practice. My own concerns about *international* service learning in particular as an 'unethical' act, serving privileged 'White Saviours' (Bruce 2016) from international schools the opportunity to look into the lives of others (Andreotti 2010;Cook 2012) and to feel a sense of 'gratification' (Mitchell, 2008), prompted me to appeal to all students beginning their IBDP with the prospect of working within a dialogic, participatory framework of inquiry into service learning that modelled my beliefs about ethical, responsible, critical practice.

Our work together over the year consisted of several group discussions and focus groups in which we used for example visual methods to capture reflections, such as a 'fortune line' (Wall 2017) technique, we learnt and practised how to conduct interviews and focus groups in an ethical way (Kvale 2006; SpeakUp 2013) or we practised constructing research questions using an 'ice cream cone' model (Brownhill, Ungarova and Bipazhanova 2017). At the start and at the end of the year, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were also conducted with each student, in order to capture their thoughts and feelings on an individual level, and to give me an insight into their own perspectives at two very different points of our inquiry journey together. In addition, I also kept a reflective journal in which I either wrote down my thoughts and feelings, or I recorded my voice with an application on my laptop.

Data analysis through both a series of feedback loops (Baumfield, Hall and Wall 2013) during the inquiry itself and through a system of coding after its completion, allowed me to identify emerging themes that had been present throughout different phases of our inquiry, and within the different collaborative spaces in which we had been working. Beyond our TCM as a group of inquirers, the students had had the chance to conduct interviews and focus groups with some of their peers, we had all worked with different teachers in some Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, and we had planned and taken part in a 'pre-PDW forum' in which the girls led a panel discussion with their whole grade on the topic of ethical service learning.

With voice clearly at its heart, and the stance and process of 'caring' as its backbone, the themes that emerged led to their conceptualisation and presentation in a framework of a *Pedagogy of CARE* for ethical, collaborative inquiry, envisaged as a pyramid model. The acronym CARE stands for the principles and attributes of *Consciousness /*

Conscious, Action / Active, Responsibility / Responsible and *Experimentation / Experimental.*

A *Pedagogy of CARE: reimagining the teacher-mentor relationship*

The pyramid model (Figure 1) for a *Pedagogy of CARE* shows the interrelationship of the pedagogical principles and personal attributes that are fundamental to collaborative relationships in teaching and learning that are both ethical in their design and their process. The different principles and attributes of the framework are positioned in a non-hierarchical relationship to each other in a four-faced, three-dimensional pyramid model without any specific 'top' or 'bottom'; this positioning is intended to reflect the non-hierarchical, democratic intentions of practice. Figure 1 shows the model in its 'net' form; it is the flattened, two-dimensional representation of a free-standing, three-dimensional model. Through this model I therefore argue that every principle and attribute of the *Pedagogy of CARE* has equal importance, and that the different parts interact with each other to make the whole. Each principle and attribute pair of the CARE framework are described below, with the teacher-mentor relationship and teacher voice as the focus.

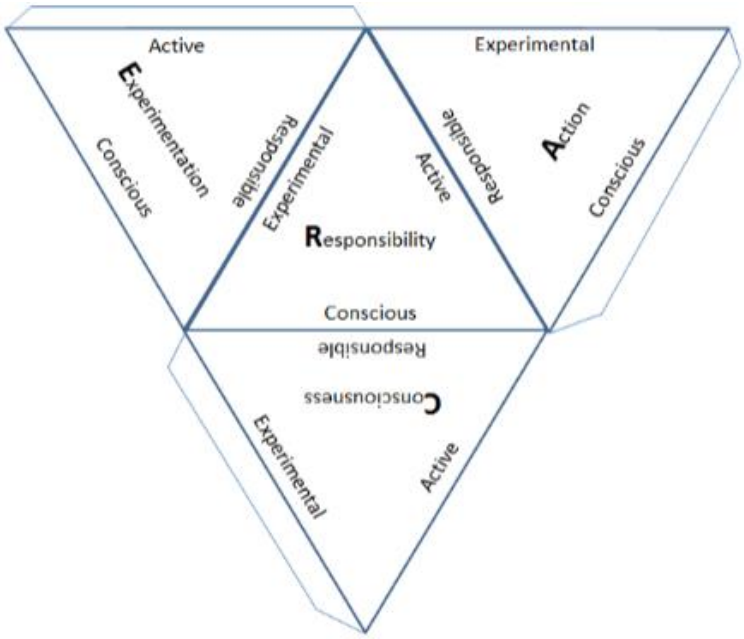

Figure 1: Pyramid Model for a Pedagogy of CARE

Consciousness / being conscious

We can find our voice if our mentor is a critically reflective, *conscious* being.

The inclusion of the principle of *consciousness* is inspired by Freire's (1970) concept of conscientização, or 'critical consciousness'; a dynamic process of action and critical reflection upon the world in order to transform it. Being *conscious* is about being engaged in an ongoing process of critical reflection that allows us to see ourselves as 'historically formed creatures capable of learning and transformation' (Stevenson 2012, p. 148). It is about being aware of our place in the world and questioning the structures, systems, power relationships and status quo within which we find ourselves. The key to this principle is that reflection on our own positionalities and values can allow us to develop empathy and ultimately change our practice. We are not all the same. We have different subjectivities and fluid, changing identities that contribute to how we engage with others and how we strive to be heard on our own terms.

Action / being active

We can find our voice if our mentor encourages us to exercise our agency, or to be *active.*

Action is related to consciousness as described above, however it takes those in the relationship beyond a mere process of critical reflection or 'disposition of critical intent' (Habermas 1972; Kinsler 2010) towards being able to exercise agency in a situation (Elliott, 2005). This agency is exercised through practice which is oriented towards an ideal, and which is dialogic in nature. A teacher and mentor who are *active* go through processes of collaborative inquiry that are geared towards fighting against the unjust practices or conditions that one uncovers through being critical. A school that practices *action* strives to bring about change and to achieve social justice through practices that are democratic and inclusive. In the process of *action*, democratic values are translated into democratic behaviour, and we are involved in 'sensuous human activity' (Bernstein 1971, p. 11) or praxis.

Responsibility / being responsible

We can find our voice if our mentor not only hears us but knows how to listen in a *responsible* way.

Responsibility is fundamentally about listening; it is an act of reciprocity and 'mutual affection and care for one another' (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 48) and, as a relational principle, it is about acknowledging others in their individuality and alterity (Irigaray 2001;

Levinas 1969). Driven by the act of caring, one listens for the intentionality of the other (Hoveid and Finne, 2015). *Responsible* practice is a 'person-centred' education (Fielding 2011; Fielding and Moss 2011) that is about the relationship between person and community. As Macmurray (1961) phrases it, the 'unit of personal is not the 'I', but the 'You and I' (p. 61). Within *responsible* practice, traditional power relations are shifted, and space is created for active, intentional listening; a commitment to voice therefore becomes unavoidable.

Experimentation / being experimental

We can find our voice if our mentor is prepared to be *experimental* and push us past where we think we are capable of going.

Experimentation is when there is a willingness to think differently, to take risks and to try out new ways of doing things. It is about a 'venture into the not yet known, and not

to be bound by the given, the familiar, the norm' (Fielding and Moss 2011, p.44). It is also about a willingness to be resilient in the face of the consequences of our actions. This *experimental* attitude allows us to go beyond the stage of a spontaneous consciousness of reality, simply by being a human in the world, to a critical stage, where we search for deeper knowledge (Freire 1976). *Experimentation* is linked to risk-taking and being brave. It is about uncovering 'unwelcome truths' (Kemmis 2006; Mockler and Groundwater-Smith 2015) about oneself, one's relation to others, or about the institutions in which we find ourselves. We have to be willing to put ourselves up for scrutiny, to open ourselves up to both critical self-reflection and to critique from others. If this critique is also complimented by *responsible* practice, then there can be no danger of it being damaging or harmful.

Where do we go from here?

So, bearing this rather utopian framework in mind, why is it that I am feeling hopeless rather than hopeful? Why have I lost my voice and what do I need to do to find it again? What role does a mentor play in the search and where do we go from here? The simple answer is that I have lost where I fit in and I need someone to help me find it again. The UK-based organisation Education Support (2020) suggests that in order for teachers to be able to produce good quality work, their wellbeing needs to be looked after. They recognise that the main factors that influence this are:

- Leaders who *support* employees and see where they fit into the bigger organisational picture

- Effective line managers who *respect, develop* and reward their staff
- Consultation that *values the voice* of employees and *listens* to their views
- Concerns and *relationships* based on *trust* and *shared values*

Comparing these factors to the CARE framework, there are many parallels; the words in italics are my additions to emphasise this. The word *mentor* is not mentioned in this list, but it is crying out for it. If just one person is listening, be it a leader, a colleague or a supervisor, and if that relationship is provided for and valued within the institutions in which we find ourselves, then we can begin to exercise our voices in the way that they deserve. If we know why we are doing what we are doing, where we fit into the school as a whole, and that what we are doing is appreciated and valued, then we will find our moment to speak and we will get our moment to be heard. Returning in conclusion to the themes of *voice* and *care* in this article, I would emphasise that if teacher wellbeing is considered to be important, and that wellbeing is connected with having voice, then the role of the 'caring' mentor is definitely something that needs to matter more; not simply to us that need them, but to those that provide the spaces within which they may operate.

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Mentors Matter; from individual mentoring relationships to building mentoring communities

A dialogue about mentoring by Yasodai Selvakumaran, Trista Hollweck and Rachel Lofthouse

Rachel's introduction. Over the last couple of years, I have been lucky enough to meet two inspirational women whose work is supporting others through building effective mentoring and also to be able to visit them and their colleagues to talk about the impact of their work.

Firstly, a UCET Gordon Kirk Travel Scholarship allowed me to visit Trista Hollweck in Canada. Trista has been working to develop the Mentor-Coach role for teachers in the Western Quebec School Board and has recently gained her doctorate in this area.

Then a trip to Australia to speak at the GCI Coaching Conference allowed me to visit Yasodai Selvakumaran, who I first met at the ICSEI conference in 2019. Yaso has taken a key role in developing mentoring practices in Rooty Hill High School in outer suburbs of Sydney, Australia and now also works beyond the school to support a wider community of educators. The two approaches to developing mentoring that matters have some parallels, but also interesting specific details and putting this special issue of CollectivED Working Papers together is a great opportunity to find out more and be able to share some of their expertise and insights more widely. This paper is constructed through a series of questions and reflections to explore their work.

Can you firstly explain what drew you to work in this field and how it fits with your educational interests and biographies?

Trista. I believe I have always been drawn to the field of mentoring and coaching. From my first day of teaching in the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB) at Symmes Junior High School in 2000, I sought out learning partnerships and mentoring opportunities from more experienced colleagues. I knew that with their guidance and expertise I would be a more effective teacher to my students.

After my first year, I made myself available to any other new staff members and worked hard to build a supportive professional learning community in my English Language Arts department. As a collaborative team, we would meet regularly, review curriculum

expectations, answer questions, challenge each other, and share resources and lesson plans. The power of learning as a collective and in relationship forever changed me as a teacher.

In 2006, my school community went through a massive transition when our small junior high school joined D'Arcy McGee High School to become two schools with a shared administration team. It was during this transition year that I took on the new challenge of leadership as a vice-principal. Among the many items in my dossier was the responsibility to support all new teachers across the two schools. I would organize and facilitate regular monthly professional learning and development workshops that aimed to both support the new teachers and build a sense of community. Working with these 12 new teachers helped me recognize the value of structured professional learning for new teachers and how much many of them appreciated their informal mentors. I wondered what was happening in schools where there was less structure and support.

The following year, two new committees were organized by the central board office to design the new teacher summer induction days and a board-wide mentoring program. I volunteered to sit on both committees in an effort to find ways we might join the focus of the two committees and create a more comprehensive and coherent induction program that would include year-long mentoring. Thus, in 2008 the Western Quebec School Board's Teacher Induction Program (TIP) was born and I began as its volunteer coordinator while on maternity leave with my second child. Once I returned to work, a 30% TIP consultant role was created for me to continue this work.

Now there are three TIP part-time consultants (130%) who coordinate and support the program, which has evolved and improved over the years based on participant feedback. Most significantly, the TIP has developed a much clearer understanding of the role of both mentoring and coaching within an induction context and the professional learning has become more evidence-informed and structured. To-date, over 70% of the school district has been involved in the TIP since it became mandatory in 2009 either as a teaching fellow (teacher new to the district) or a mentor-coach. Additionally, all but one new administrator (principals and vice-principles) have been mentor-coaches in the TIP.

As a practitioner, I continue to be involved in the TIP as a distance mentor-coach, consultant for the TIP team and invited presenter. Also, as you note in my introduction, I have recently completed my doctorate and examined the influence of the

TIP on mentor-coaches and the district as a qualitative case study. As a self-described pracademic, I feel fortunate to have been able to not only share my ongoing research findings and resources in scholarly publications but also see how my research can positively influence the program's development.

Yaso. I was originally drawn into the idea of mentoring from my own beginning teacher mentors. It was a defining moment, similar to when I realised that my own teachers had inspired me to go into teaching. I realised I could not have made it through my first years as a teacher without them. From behaviour management, subject pedagogies and developing my teacher identity, their support was crucial. I supervised my first pre-service teacher around this time too. I realised that I was drawn to being a formal mentor to colleagues because it was about modelling excellent classroom practice and collaborating for continual improvement. This helped me see what leadership from the classroom looked like and how working with pre-service teachers and colleagues was about contributing back to the profession. It continues to fit into my Education interests as I have also now had the privilege of working with mentoring mentors. It brings me great joy to work with colleagues to improve teaching and learning. It ultimately benefits more students from our own context and beyond as we collectively empower each other to share our expertise.

Rachel's reflection. It is interesting that both Yaso and Trista position their own experiences of being mentored in their first years of teaching as formative, not only in developing their classroom practice, but also their commitment to the work of the teaching profession. These critical early experiences led to an enthusiasm for engagement, actively seeking opportunities to both mentor others and also to support the development of wider mentoring practices.

When you started to work on developing mentoring were you trying to solve a specific problem in your context, and if so, what was it?

Trista. I started to work on developing mentoring in order to first support new teachers in my own school context and then more broadly in my school district. However, when I joined the two district committees responsible for designing and developing the TIP, I began to realize the incredible challenge our school district had historically in attracting and retaining effective new teachers, especially in our rural and northern schools. Although many school districts struggle with attrition and retention, it is important to situate the WQSB in its context as one of nine

English language school boards in a mainly French-speaking province. The district is also very large geographically (about the size of Ireland) but only has just over 7000 students and 450 staff across 25 primary (pre-Kindergarten to grade 6), secondary (grades 7-11) and pre-k-11 schools. Whereas the majority of the school population is found in its urban core, the WQSB has small rural schools of only 35 students, three staff and a part-time principal. Historically, it has been hard to staff and retain teachers in the more rural areas and in certain subject areas such as French and special education. Another one of the major challenges for the district is that with few English language teacher education programs offered at Universities within the province, Human Resources must recruit from outside the province. Specifically, many of the WQSB teachers come from the neighbouring province of Ontario where the pay and benefits are significantly better (i.e. $20,000 a year pay difference) and where they often return when a job opens up.

Another specific problem that was revealed by working on the TIP was the lack of a coherent professional learning and development program for experienced teachers. When I started at the WQSB, I was lucky to have been part of a five-year exciting Instructional Intelligence (II) Initiative that partnered with Dr. Barrie Bennett from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. The II initiative was a professionally transformational experience and has changed my teaching practice forever. Since the II initiative was also a topic of my Masters' thesis, I can report that this perspective was common across II participants. During this initiative, I was also provided with a number of incredible leadership opportunities such as being a WQSB II trainer and certified Tribes (TLC) Trainer for my district. Being an II trainer taught me the importance of developing relevant, practical, ongoing, and sustained professional learning activities for experienced teachers.

However, in 2007, as a result of leadership changes at the central office, the II initiative was swiftly discontinued. Recognizing how impactful II had been for me and so many of my colleagues, it became my goal to embed II principles of community-building, ongoing and sustained professional collaboration, and innovative instructional strategies into all TIP workshops for new teachers and mentor-coaches.

Yaso. The specific problem in our context was one of beginning teacher induction for a high number of beginning/ early career teachers. This was a reality at the school before I myself had joined as one of those beginning teachers and there were already strong processes in

place for induction, classroom observation, teacher accreditation and professional learning. It was one of the reasons I originally wanted to work there. I saw these in action as a pre-service teacher completing my final placements there. In my third year of teaching, there were expressions of interest sought by our Principal, Christine Cawsey for a distributed leadership team for a 'Professional Practice Mentor' in each faculty. I applied and was successful for being the mentor for the Humanities faculty. This team became pivotal to not only mentoring beginning teachers in the school but also in mentoring teachers of all career stages and distributing leadership in professional learning. More recently, we have had registration requirements become streamlined for all teachers to be registered against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. This has made it even more crucial to have mentors that can work across the career continuum in our context.

Rachel's reflection. Looking at these examples of mentoring from my own perspective in England is fascinating. Here we have a long tradition of mentoring in teacher education while student teachers are on placements, and a more ad hoc system of support for Newly Qualified Teachers. We are due to roll out a new Early Career Framework in pilot areas in 2020-21 which alongside a new training curriculum includes an entitlement to mentoring for teachers in their first two years. In both Trista's and Yaso's narratives we see an initial recognition that mentoring can support teachers during induction periods but also a sense that as the system matures it can become an engine of support and professional development at other career stages.

Can you share the key principles of the approaches that you have developed and explain what this look like in practice?

Trista. The key principles of the TIP are built into the culture of the WQSB as a learning organization: to both support and grow teachers in the WQSB as a community. For teaching fellows, this means that not only will they receive just-in-time non-evaluative support from their mentor-coach for their first year in the district, but that they will also be engaged in a coaching partnership that aims, as John Whitmore would say, to unleash their potential. During each of the two years of the TIP, there are a number of professional learning and development activities provided by the TIP specifically designed to build community and stretch the instructional practice of teaching fellows.

For mentor-coaches (MC), there is individual support offered by the TIP consultants to help them navigate what it means to support someone new to the district. The MC Professional Learning Network (PLN) also

offers professional learning and development to help build a mentor-coach community and improve coaching practice across the district. The MC PLN has also adopted a differentiated approach whereby some PLN sessions are targeted for newer mentor-coaches and others are intended to challenge and stretch more experienced coaches. It is interesting to note that in some schools in the district, experienced mentor-coaches have now transitioned into peer coaches and leaders of the coaching process in their schools. Additionally, the district has recently developed a Principal Induction Program (PIP) wherein every new principal is assigned a non-evaluative mentor-coach to support and challenge them. Through a number of professional learning and development pathways, the goal is to build the mentoring and coaching expertise and culture throughout the district.

Yaso. The key principles underpinning this team is one where the mentor team models excellence in instructional leadership. They commit to this with an application for an expression of interest that reflects the core responsibilities and is updated each year as needed. A core part of this is having an in-depth understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at all levels. This includes Graduate, Proficient (that Graduate teachers must work towards and submit a portfolio of evidence) and Highly Accomplished and Lead levels that recognise working with colleagues and leading learning at an exemplary level. In practice, the mentors work with individual teachers and set goals in line with our system performance development plans. Teachers and leaders are encouraged to use the standards to aim for Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The mentors have set meeting times fortnightly with early career teachers in their first two years and regular times with those working towards their Proficient Teacher Accreditation status. Mentors work closely with the Head Teachers to support all teachers from various career levels based on need. To support the mentors, the mentor team work collaboratively and meet fortnightly with the Principal and Deputy Principal who oversee Professional Practice in the school. We continue to have formal training in mentoring ourselves as we continue to develop our own capacity to build the capacity of others.

Rachel's reflection. Education systems often become territory occupied by structures, hierarchies and acronyms, defining roles and responsibilities. When we read the two responses above, we see how mentoring becomes associated and also helps to create some of these. We also see a commitment to building networks and communities of

mentors, ensuring that the have opportunities to talk about and develop their work.

How has your understanding of mentoring evolved over time?

Trista. My understanding of mentoring has completely evolved over time. In 2006, as the TIP team, we bought a mentoring kit from the United States to help us train and develop our mentors. Although the kit served its immediate purpose, we quickly realized we needed to design our own bespoke program that would fit in our own unique Canadian context. We spent a lot of time in those first few years with our mentor-coaches defining the terms mentoring and coaching. Whereas the mentoring kit introduced coaching as part of the mentoring role, we soon came to see mentoring and coaching as two distinct yet interconnected approaches that were both essential in an induction program.

During this period (in 2012) I began my doctoral studies at the University of Ottawa and focused on mentoring and coaching. Initially, I was only interested in induction and mentoring, but that soon expanded to include the coaching literature. I was also fortunate to be able to connect to some of the leading experts in the field through social media platforms such as twitter that really helped me with my conceptualization of both terms.

Based on feedback from TIP participants and informed by my doctoral research, the TIP structure, training and documentation (such as the TIP Handbook) went through some significant changes in 2016. In particular, the terminology was changed to reflect our new learning. The New Teacher Program (NTP) became the Teacher Induction Program (TIP), mentors became mentor-coaches, new teachers became teaching fellows (since not all teachers were beginning teachers) and the mentoring program became the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) to reflect the reciprocal learning found within a fellowship. During this time, we also explored a variety of coaching processes such as instructional coaching (Knight), GROWTH coaching (Campbell & van Nieuwerburgh), evocative coaching (Tschannen-morans), transformational coaching (Aguilar), solution-focused coaching (Jackson & McKergow , learning-focused relationships (Lipton & Wellman) and the power of coaching (OLEVI). As our learning about coaching and coaching process grows, so do the program offerings.

Yaso. My understanding of mentoring has definitely changed from being an early career teacher mentee to being a mentor. As an early career teacher mentee, I never really thought about mentoring being a two way or reciprocal professional relationship. From courses completed, mentoring pre-service

teachers, colleagues and mentors in mentoring, I have come to appreciate just how much I learn from my mentees. I have learnt that new mentors are needed as we navigate different career stages and opportunities and that these are not necessarily tied to a position. Finally, I see now that mentoring works best when both parties are committed mutually to using it as an opportunity to reflect, seek advice and develop based on set protocols, but are flexible enough to adapt as needed.

Rachel's reflection. Establishing and sustaining mentoring requires protocols, systems of support and also opportunities for ongoing professional development for mentors. But effective mentoring goes beyond the procedural as it is embedded in and shapes relationships. Reflecting on mentoring, both Trista and Yaso recognise how it has the capacity to contribute to the building of professional cultures which are inclusive, adaptive and change-making.

If someone asks you to justify the time and resource related to mentoring what do you say?

Trista. My initial response would be to ask if there is a better way to spend our time and resources? For me, the power of the TIP and the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF) specifically is that it is a system-wide growth-oriented approach that has the power to change the culture of teaching and learning in the school district at every level. It is about building relationships, improving professional learning and development and capitalizing on the expertise that is already in our district. From my research it is clear that the relationships that are formed during the TIP years continue to develop over the years and it is a way to grow new and experienced teachers as well as capture system expertise that is often lost when people retire or leave the profession.

I love that there is no 'right' way to do mentoring and coaching. Everything depends on the relationship, context and needs of the fellowship. As such, from the very first year a teaching fellow works in the district, they experience first-hand that the WQSB values a culture of learning and growth. The MCF is about supporting professionals to work together on topics that are relevant and meaningful to them and their context (collaborative inquiry), anchored in a process that is both supportive and challenging (collaborative professionalism) and with the view that as a fellowship and community they can make a difference in the lives of the students in our schools and district (collective efficacy). For me, I really am interested if there are any better ways to spend our time and resources?

Yaso. Mentoring is key to improving learning for our students by being the fundamental enabler for teachers and leaders to be the best they can be throughout various career stages. The retention of teachers in many parts of the world remains an issue and mentoring is key to supporting teachers and leaders. On-going teacher professional learning is needed to support, develop and empower teachers and leaders to adapt to the changes and complexities in schools. Our teachers need to be developed to mentor others, our mentors need to be mentored in how to mentor and the time and resources to do this underpin the quality of Education we can provide now and continue to provide in the future. We also need to ensure that we have partnerships between schools, those supporting schools, research and universities to work in a way that is informed by evidence but suited to each particular context.

Rachel's reflection. We are often asked to follow the 'evidence' in education, and to do 'what works'. This seems logical but can lead us to seek out and implement what appear likely quick fixes. Mentoring cannot be seen as a sticking plaster to complex problems (such as teacher retention). It can however become part of the ecology of practice which creates a profession which has greater internal connectivity and creates the impetus for building and learning from wider networks and partners.

What opportunities might there be for you to further develop this work in the future? What are you looking forward to?

Trista. There is so much I am looking forward to. Since its inception, the TIP is an evolving program that changes based on participant feedback. I look forward to seeing how it changes and grows as the coaching expertise grows in the district and different TIP consultants take on the TIP leadership role. I think there is still more work to be done to develop a more coherent and comprehensive (online, perhaps?) mentoring and coaching course for all new mentor-coaches and consider different professional learning and development opportunities for those more experienced mentor-coaches. It would be excellent for this course to lead to official coaching certification and/or post-secondary credits. Developing a more consistent and structured MC PLN would also be a good next step to work on so that we can better celebrate and share the expertise of the district's master mentor-coaches and build a rich mentoring and coaching community. Another future opportunity would be to consider the ways in which the TIP can better support the development of individual school coaching cultures and find ways to better

communicate and clarify the program's purpose and expectations beyond TIP participants. Ultimately, there is no shortage of future opportunities and I continue to be energized and fulfilled by this work. Thank you for the opportunity to share my work and passion.

Yaso. I have very much been immersed in the practice side of mentoring and want to formally develop this work in research in the future. I have been fortunate to participate in the last two International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement in Marrakech in January 2020 and Stavanger in 2019. I've made connections here that have shown me practical ways to bridge research and practice with colleagues globally. A CollectivED symposium in 2019 was one of them. I then had a chance to connect with Professor Rachel Lofthouse when she came to Australia and we co-presented at ICSEI 2020 sharing the work of Rooty Hill High School and reflections from the visit. I love what I do now and am looking forward to learning more in mentoring and continuing to collaborate with colleagues locally and globally. I also want to acknowledge my colleagues in the Rooty Hill High School Professional Practice Mentor Team.

Rachel's reflection. Both Yaso and Trista work across boundaries and borders. While they have gained opportunities to learn with and from, and to contribute to, international research and professional communities they remain committed to their local contexts and to their own work in mentoring and the teams which they lead and support. It has been lovely to read their responses to my questions, and I am sure that both they and their colleagues will keep building on the strengths of the practices that have evolved.

Additional reading

You can read more about the ICSEI CollectivED sessions here
https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/carnegie-education/2019/12/collectived-at-icsei-2020/

Trista has also contributed a working paper on the TIP model in CollectivED Issue 4
https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/collectived-june-2018-issue-4.pdf?la=en

Do Early Career Physics Teachers Need a Different Approach to Mentoring?
Reflections of External Mentoring from the Institute of Physics.

A Practice Insight Paper by Daisy Fox

The number of specialist physics teachers entering secondary education has been below target since 2014. Research also suggests that it is becoming more challenging to retain physics teachers and whilst leaving rates for teachers across all subjects has increased by 3% since 2011 (Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). Research highlights that the odds of a physics NQT leaving the profession within their first five years is 29% higher compared to non-science NQTs based on a study of teachers who began their career in 2010. (Allen & Sims, 2017).

The Institute of Physics (IOP) has explored why the challenges of retention are more acute for physics teachers and how to best support those in their early career, offering a mentoring programme based around these aims:

- To connect early career physics teachers with other physics teachers in their locality
- To provide an external mentor outside of the performance management chain
- To develop teachers' physics specific subject and pedagogical content knowledge

What follows is based on our learning from various mentoring programmes. One of our findings is that the term mentoring can carry generic, pastoral implications whereas the subject specific support offered is the beginning of professional learning relating to physics subject-matter knowledge. Therefore, we are starting to use the term Early Career Professional Learning (ECPL) rather than mentoring for this support.

Making connections

It is often the case that physics teachers find themselves isolated in their schools which presents the challenge of not only having someone to collaborate with, but the added uncertainty of whether they are progressing in the right direction. In addition to this, some early career physics teachers find themselves geographically isolated in certain regions across the country which can make it more difficult to access subject specific support.

Access to an IOP mentor has provided an opportunity for early career physics teachers to connect as the mentor is able to act as an agent, suggesting professional development

opportunities and networking events coordinated by the IOP along with other events managed by CPD providers.

'having ties to [my IOP mentor] has lead me to many of the other excellent training courses available. I've attended Ogden Trust physics training at the University of Cambridge, Isaac Physics training and mentoring for teachers and the Stimulating Physics Network day hosted by the IOP. All of these events came as recommendations through [my mentor]'

2nd year physics teacher, East England

Isolation also causes the issue that inexperienced physics teachers have a greater magnitude of responsibility thrust upon them as soon as they walk through the door as a newly qualified teacher, taking responsibility for schemes of work, equipment and exam classes. IOP Mentors provide an opportunity for early career teachers to feel supported and reassured in their physics as they develop their skills in the classroom.

'It's almost a treat to see other physics teachers but because you're the only physics teacher, it's difficult to get out. If you haven't got the opportunity to reach out to an organisation like the IOP it's even worse. The IOP is the only team you've got sitting down with them just to tell you you're doing it right is really important because you haven't got a person at school to do it for you – especially with A-Level.'

5th year physics teacher, North West England

External Mentoring

A key theme of the support and professional learning the IOP provides is that the mentor is external to the school. Whilst external support isn't considered an essential component to most mentoring models, having a mentor outside of the performance management chain is strongly recommended by several authors on the topic and is an approach which is adopted by other organisations outside of education (Hobson. *et al,* 2016).

The opportunity for an early career teacher to have access to an external mentor safeguards confidentiality in the support relationship and can provide a safe space for the teacher to develop ideas as well acting as a sounding board to release emotions without fear of repercussions (Hobson, A.J. *et al,* 2012).

'The mentoring programme has always been my first port of call for any and all queries. My mentor is always available and happy to help by providing a valuable external sounding board outside of the school system and bringing years of their own teaching expertise.'

Newly Qualified Teacher, West Midlands

External mentoring does present challenges. One of the main challenges for IOP mentors is to ensure that we are complimenting mentoring which is occurring in school and not working in competition with it.

Expectations are clear from the outset that the main focus of support is to develop the subject specific elements of the teacher's professional development. This potential overlap is another reason for distinguishing the subject specific work from the pastoral support by calling the former Early Career Professional Learning and the latter mentoring.

Some newly qualified and early career teachers can find the offer of extra support overwhelming both in terms of finding the time to make contact with their mentor but also, the impression it gives in school if they are receiving extra support.

The implications of this leads to a variation in the uptake of early career teachers opting into the support with some teachers on the mentoring programmes reporting that they thought their schools were putting them forward because department leads thought they were struggling. Here we observe the importance of professional development culture within a school over a performativity culture. If schools can establish a culture where more opportunities are available for teachers to develop, as well as ensuring that receiving early career subject-specific professional support isn't linked to the performance management chain, it could be possible to shake off the taboo and preconceptions about a mentoring or coaching relationship.

Mentoring as part of a bigger professional development picture

One of the main strengths of IOP mentoring is that it is offered alongside a programme of subject specific CPD.

Mentees interviewed have all commented on how the programme of support has significantly improved their ability to teach physics giving pupils an enhanced experience of the subject in the classroom.

'My knowledge and understanding have progressed beyond anything I could have expected. This has had a strong positive impact on the students I have taught and continue to teach, both in terms of engagement and progress.'

2nd year physics teacher, Yorkshire

The power of subject specific CPD is the ability to address and support all the key themes which are attributed to good teaching. More recently, the IOP has been working with more specialist or 'in-field' physics teachers to not only develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge, but to also better develop them as physics leaders. Encouraging teachers to reflect on strategies and teaching approaches has been shown to have a bigger impact than

simply telling teachers what to do without links to classroom practice (Coe, 2020). All IOP mentors are also development coaches who work with networks of schools to deliver physics workshops. Mentees are invited to attend these sessions as well as being offered the opportunity to attend regional events and national events to develop their teaching ideas and share their own best practice.

Opportunities for Further Development

For school leaders, who are considering how mentoring might look with the introduction of the Early Career Framework, the IOP's experience may be helpful in terms of insights concerning the strengths of subject specific mentoring and the impact it can make on early career teachers. The challenge of retention can be more acute for physics teachers, as we know they lack the opportunities to develop the physics specific element of their craft. They find themselves working in isolation and where they've had access to an IOP mentor, they have been able to rapidly make progress in their confidence and ability to teach physics.

The IOP has a vast wealth of experience in supporting early career teachers with subject specific support and is exploring how to develop its model further. A limitation of the programme is the accessibility early career teachers have to an external physics mentor. To address this, the IOP are exploring opportunities for remote, web based mentoring to support teachers.

Some of the early career teachers we work with want to get involved with supporting other physics teachers. The experience and background of our early career teachers is wide ranging with some of our mentees having been leaders and managers in other careers before coming into teaching. We are beginning to see some of our early career teachers who are in years 3 – 5 now acting as peer mentors to those just embarking on their teaching career and we're keen to support them in this development.

The IOP continues its work in supporting physics teachers over a range of projects and is constantly developing and refining its model to ensure that secondary school physics teachers are supported resulting in pupils in the UK having an inspiring and engaging experience in physics lessons.

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