



Issue 7

CollectivED Working Papers

Working Papers from CollectivED; the Hub for Mentoring and Coaching

A University Research and Practice
Centre where we

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

Author surname, author initial (2019), Paper title, CollectivED [7], pages x-xx, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University.

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Editorial: Welcome to CollectivED Issue 7

CollectivEd: The Hub for Mentoring and Coaching is a Research and Practice Centre based in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University. Our aim is to support professionals and researchers in a shared endeavour of enabling professional practice and learning which has integrity and the potential to be transformative. We are interested in all voices, we will learn from many experiences and will engage with and undertake research.

Welcome to our seventh issue of CollectivEd Working Papers. Once again it has been an absolute pleasure to collate these papers. They demonstrate the breadth and depth of thinking in relation to teacher learning and the significance of supporting, enabling and developing teachers and education leaders. These papers represent the lived experiences of researchers and practitioners working to support the professional learning and practice development of teachers and other education staff at all stages of their career. Please do read them and use them to provoke your own reflections and action.

Information about the contributors is provided at the end of this issue, along with an invitation to contribute.

Please read our contents pages for details of each paper. You will see that they come in a variety of forms.

In common with our first six issues we have

- think pieces [3,5,7,9,11,13,18]
- research working papers [4,6,8,15]
- practice insight working papers [16,17]
- the CollectivED interview [21]
- a conference review [18]
- book reviews [11,12,20].

For the first time we are also pleased to be including

- two abridged essays written by MA students at Carnegie School of Education [10,14]
- two CollectivED symposium summaries (each one detailing contributions of a significant number of researchers and practitioners) [1,2].

Key themes emerge across the working papers.

We continue to focus *on how mentoring and coaching can support individuals in*



professional development at a range of career stages, and how the way that we conceptualise the practice, the emerging relationships, the frameworks that guide the work and the tools available to us influence coaching and mentoring.

We are also interested in how CPD and whole school cultures and practices evolve and can be deliberately developed over time as we expand our understanding of how to support professional learning, well-being, leadership development and school improvement.



Changing our schools from the inside out; Is this what we mean by ‘Collaborative Professionalism?’

A CollectivED Symposium summary by Rachel Lofthouse

On 16th January 2019 CollectivED held a research and practice symposium at Leeds Beckett University, where we gathered together practitioners who were able to share examples of how schools were starting to work differently with, and for, their staff.

Our main featured case studies were based on research conducted by two of the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University 2017-18 Carey Philpott Research Partners. Each provides a unique evidence-based case study.

Our first contribution focused on a whole school approach to the mental health and well-being staff and children. This research was presented by Headteacher **Sarah Beveridge** of Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust and **Caroline Bligh** who was her research partner at Carnegie School of Education (@YCATSCHOOLS, @blighadele).

Our second contribution offered insights into how a MAT was reimagining staff appraisal by

trials a collaborative approach to school-based professional learning. This research was presented by **Gary Handforth**, Executive Principal and Director of Education for Bright Futures Educational Trust (@garyth66, and **Owen Carter** of ImpactEd (@od_carter, @ImpactED_tweets).

Following these other contributors told their own stories of changing the ways that they worked to support or develop staff, and the participants had opportunities to reflect on how these emerging practices might support the building of Collaborative Professionalism. **Claire Grosvenor** (@cgrassociate), a strategic leadership and learning coach, and **Steve Coucill**, assistant headteacher in charge of teaching and learning at Woodlands School in Derby led a discussion about adopting a whole school coaching approach to enable authentic evidence-based inquiry led. **Steven Riley** (@stv_riley), director of research at Bingley Grammar School, discussed his work to add coaching and mentoring support enhance teacher research and enquiry and reviewed



the emerging evidence which is forming the basis of his EdD.

Rachel Lofthouse (@DrRLofthouse), director of CollectivED, drew on her study visit to the Western Quebec School Board and schools where she worked with **Trista Hollweck** and learned more about the Teacher Induction Programme there allowing her to reflect on the universal professional challenges of enabling learning from teacher mentoring, coaching and induction practices. Finally (but by no means least) **Claire Dutton** (@D30Claire) from Richmond Hill Academy in Rose Learning Trust talked about putting teachers in the driving seat by exploring the potential for collaborative practices to enhance teacher agency. This is now the theme of her EdD.

Our discussions focused around the question, 'as schools are unique and challenging places what can we learn from each other and from the concept of Collaborative Professionalism to help all members of school communities to thrive?'. Andy Hargreaves and Michael O'Connor's book 'Collaborative Professionalism' was published in 2018 and draws on international cases of professionals in schools working in new and highly

productive ways that go beyond co-operation, welcome knowledge and expertise from both internal and external sources, and work with rigour on the aspects of school life that change outcomes for both students for the better.

They refer to 10 tenets of CP as follows:

1. **Collective Autonomy:** educators have more independence from top-down authority, but less independence from each other.
2. **Collective Efficacy:** the belief that together we can make a difference to the students we teach.
3. **Collaborative Inquiry:** teachers routinely explore problems, issues or difference to improve practice, embedded in their everyday work.
4. **Collective Responsibility:** a mutual obligation to help each other to serve 'our students', not 'my students'.
5. **Collective Initiative:** fewer 'initiatives', more initiative from teachers who step forward and are supported by the system.
6. **Mutual Dialogue:** conversations are actively instigated including dialogue about valued differences of opinion, curriculum, behaviour, honest feedback.



Protocols include listening and clarification.

7. Joint Work: e.g. team teaching, collaborative planning and peer reviews facilitated by structures, tools and protocols.
8. Common Meanings and Purpose: greater than academic achievement alone, engaging with goals of education that enable your people to flourish for themselves and for society.
9. Collaborating with Students: teachers and students construct change together.
10. Big-Picture Thinking for All: everyone gets the big picture, they see it, live it and create it together.

None of the case studies discussed at the event were designed or implemented with *Collaborative Professionalism* in mind, but it is a useful framework through which to reflect on them and possibly your own settings. It is worth noting that Collaborative Professionalism is different to professional collaboration, in part at least because it helps us to reconceptualise the profession itself and our roles within in. For example, when

reviewing a case study of teachers mentoring and coaching each other in Columbian network of schools Hargreaves and O'Connor describe the teachers' 'thoughtful work that involves dialogue as well as doing' going on to state that in collaborative professionalism 'talk is part of the work' (p.160).

Hargreaves and O'Connor go on to caution that 'not all collaboration is equally effective' (p. 20), and to draw attention to the degrees to which teachers collaborative work can be characterised as having different degrees of solidarity and solidity (substance). They reinforce this by stating that 'collaborative professionalism is about integrating relationships and rigor' (p. 23), and also about drawing in relevant 'solid expertise', which may come from outside or inside the school.

If you are developing projects with colleagues which involve new ways of working together it might be useful to consider whether it offers a way to refine your plans and build more capacity to change schools from the inside out.



References and related working papers:

- Beveridge, S. and Bligh, C. 2019. A whole school approach to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and children, *CollectivED* [7], pp.17-16, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Carter, O., Somekh, B. and Handforth, G. 2018. Reimagining staff appraisal: trialling a collaborative approach to school-based professional learning, *CollectivED* [6], pp. 42-51, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Dutton, D. and Wardle, J. 2018. Beyond Performance Management by Observation: An Enquiry into Effective Professional Development for Teachers across a Multi Academy Trust, Carey Philpott Research Partnership: Research Reports [1]. pp. 71-80, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Handforth, G. 2018. Re-imagining performance management, *CollectivED* [4], pp. 52-66, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
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- Lasic, T. 2018. Book Review and Synopsis of Hargreaves, A. & O'Connor, M. Collaborative Professionalism, *CollectivED* [5], pp.110-116, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Riley, S. 2018. How can I develop the capacity for research informed and evidence based practices within our school? Carey Philpott Research Partnership: Research Reports [1]. pp. 30-43, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Riley, S. 2019. Developing CPD provision by embedding enquiry/research practices supported by coaching and mentoring techniques, *CollectivED* [7], pp.83-90, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University



Gathering an international perspective on supporting teacher learning through mentoring and coaching.

A CollectivED Symposium summary by Rachel Lofthouse

The International Congress of School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) 2019 was held in Stavanger, Norway in January 2019. CollectivED contributed our first international symposium to the event with the theme of ‘Mentoring, coaching and collaborative dialogue to support professional learning throughout teachers’ career paths; exploring roles, responsibilities, tensions and opportunities.’

Internationally, both Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) are under reform, creating the opportunity to rethink roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations. Trainee teachers are experiencing extended school placements, with school-based mentors taking on roles including supervision, tutoring, feedback and monitoring. In some jurisdictions there is provision for ongoing mentoring and / or coaching of early career teachers to help them to develop practice and to promote teacher retention. CPDL often foregrounds the role of shared enquiry into, and dialogue

about, pedagogic practice. Maximising the potential of coaching, mentoring and collaboration in ITE and CPDL is critical in enabling teachers to contextualise, authenticate and reframe relevant theory, research and policy to inform and shape their practices in complex educational settings. This requires appropriate and well deployed structures, roles, processes and tools. The opportunities and tensions which emerge in developing these practices were explored in the papers in this international symposium.

Through the presentations and the follow up discussion we wanted to explore the question, *How can we maximise the potential of mentoring, coaching and other forms of collaborative dialogue to support professional learning throughout teachers’ career paths?*

The presentations included in this symposium offered insights from Finland, the UK, Japan, Canada (Western Quebec), Wales and Australia. Summaries of each presentation are given below. If you would like more



information on any of the presentations, please contact the contributors.

Sharing and developing mentoring practices in Initial Teacher Education (England and Japan)

Mary Briggs, Oxford Brookes University, School of Education, England, in association with School of Education, Kyoto, Japan mentoring in ITT. mbriqgs@brookes.ac.uk @mjb9756

Mary shared her work on a collaborative research project focused on teacher training, which was conducted in partnership by researchers from Kyoto University of Education in Japan (KUE) and Oxford Brookes University in the United Kingdom (OBU). The purpose of this research was to understand the differences between initial teacher education (ITE) in the two countries and see if insights into the advantages and disadvantages of each system could lead to improvements at each institution. The researchers focused specifically on how teacher trainees, classroom advisors, and mentors worked to develop teachers to become effective reflective practitioners.

The researchers became aware of a fundamental theoretical difference in approach; teacher training at KUE aimed to assist trainees in becoming members of a community of practice, with teacher training at OBU being more focused on providing each individual student teacher with a useful context for transformative learning. A significant element has been a review of the advantages of group mentoring rather than one to one mentoring in ITE and the implications for recruitment and retention of teachers in England.

*You can read more about this research in this issue of *CollectivED*.*

Mentoring and tutoring to support professional growth of student teachers (Finland)

Raija Erkkilä, Iris Hoppo and Sirpa Perunka, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, School of Professional Teacher Education, Finland. Raija.Erkkila@oamk.fi iris.hoppo@oamk.fi

Raija and Sirpa work as teacher educators in the School of Professional Teacher Education in Oulu, Finland. Over the years they have heard a multitude of stories concerning student teachers' teaching practice experiences. Some student teachers have had



very successful teaching practice with excellent mentoring, but, on the other hand, some student teachers have talked of poor experiences, feeling that they had not had enough guidance or conversation with their mentors. Raija and Sirpa decided to start a research project of student teachers' experiences concerning their mentoring experiences. The project sought to understand the complexity of mentoring process during the teaching practice period.

A pracademic's exploration of mentoring, coaching and induction in the Western Québec School Board (Canada)

Trista Hollweck, University of Ottawa, Canada.

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Over the last ten years Trista has played a significant role in developing the Teacher Induction Programme (TIP) in the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB) and is now completing her doctorate drawing on the evidence of its impact on teachers and schools. WQSB introduced a Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship as part of their mandatory TIP in 2009. Mentoring, and coaching have been gaining traction across Canadian school districts as approaches to support teacher professional learning,

especially for early career teachers. The powerful potential of professional collaboration has been well documented in the international research literature.

However, when it comes to mentoring and coaching, not only do jurisdictions vary in terms of programs, practices and policies, but the research literature has raises concerns about significant tensions in the experiences of practice in education systems with high stakes accountability and also challenges of 'scaling up' effective innovations. Trista reflected on evidence of the impact of the TIP and also explored how it continues to evolve.

You can read more about the TIP programme in CollectivED Issue 4.

Co-constructing a shared understanding of the teaching of thinking using video reflection (Wales)

Helen Lewis, Yr Athrofa: Institute of Education; University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

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In this presentation Helen considered how teachers adopted collaborative co-learner roles to support each other's development and professional learning using shared



dialogue based on video reflection of their own teaching. Research indicates that effective, critical reflection is challenging, with a tendency for teachers to focus on technical aspects of pedagogy, which may be less effective in transforming practice than critical reflections. Helen's research took a pragmatic, mixed-methods approach the study explored whether 'video stimulated reflective dialogue' or VSRD based upon video extracts of their normal classroom practices supported six teachers with varying degrees of experience to develop high-quality interaction with young learners.

The VSRD was used as part of a larger study into developing pedagogies for teaching thinking. Helen found that adopting their co-learner roles allowed each teacher to re-examine and deepen their reflections when engaging in reflective dialogue using video as a stimulus, compared to reflections based on memory alone. The teachers identified professional developmental aspirations based on their video reflection and were able to put these into practice.

You can read more about this research in CollectivED Issue 2.

Exploring the significance of contrasting models of instructional leadership and coaching in contemporary Australian school improvements policies (Australia)

Jordana Hunter, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne, Australia.

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Jordana is a doctoral student and former policy-maker in Australia. Her presentation focused on to the use of instructional coaches embedded within schools to improve the quality of teaching practice. In her research she has explored the effects of two very different conceptions of school-based instructional coaching embedded in two contemporary Australian school improvement policies—the Early Action for Success initiative in New South Wales (NSW) and the Professional Learning Communities initiative in Victoria. Both policies create new 'instructional leader' positions in schools for the purpose of improving teacher professional learning to raise students' academic outcomes.

Despite this common objective, the instructional leadership roles differ significantly in both design and enactment. In particular, in NSW, instructional leaders are expected to adopt coaching and mentoring



stances to develop teachers' practice. In Victoria, by contrast, instructional leaders are primarily expected to guide and facilitate school-based teacher professional learning communities engaged in repeated cycles of inquiry. Her findings suggest that the purpose, design and broader policy context of school-based instructional coach roles is closely related to the types of professional interactions that occur between instructional leaders and teachers. In addition, the importance of pedagogical expertise in underpinning transformative professional conversations is seen as critical. The findings also suggest some limitations of school-based professional learning communities as drivers of teacher practice change.

Discussion

Rachel Lofthouse acted as the discussant for the symposium and offered reflections on key themes which emerged, before opening the

floor to a wider conversation between the attendees and the contributors.

One of the interesting aspects was that across the five papers the symposium had offered multiple perspectives, including mentors and mentees coaches and coachees, leaders and policy-makers. There was also a sense of the individual, collective and institutional roles within the systems, practices and policies discussed. This was illustrated through the different lenses and scales that the research focused on, from one-to-one relationships up to state wide programmes. In all presentations a common theme emerged which was that of the significance of the sense of ownership of the professional development process (whether or not the participation was voluntary) and that this was in part influenced by the nature of the relationships between the mentors and/or coaches and the student and/or practicing teachers they were supporting.

Linked CollectivED papers

- Briggs, M. 2019. Mentoring primary trainee teachers: what can we learn from Japan? CollectivED [7], pp.35-39 Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Hollweck, T. 2018. A pracademic's exploration of mentoring, coaching and induction in the Western Québec School Board, CollectivED [4], pp. 31-40, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- Lewis, H. 2017. Video-stimulated reflective dialogue - a useful tool for re-examining and reflecting on practice, CollectivED [2], pp.5-10, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University



Leadership to support a coaching culture

A think piece working paper by Jill Berry

On Thursday 15 November 2018 I was invited to speak at a Teacher Development Trust conference in Manchester: 'Coaching in schools – dialogue to drive performance'. My particular interest and area of expertise is leadership, so I chose as my title 'Leadership to support a coaching culture'.

As part of my preparation for the session, I read 'The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools' (2018) by John Campbell and Christian van Nieuwerburgh. I found this useful in terms of clarifying my understanding. For example, it quotes Jim Knight's definition of an instructional coach:

"I have come to define instructional coaches as educators who 'partner with teachers to analyse current reality, set goals, identify and explain teaching strategies to meet goals, and provide support until the goals are met'."

And John Campbell and Christian van Nieuwerburgh's description of a coaching conversation:

"A one-to-one conversation that focuses on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening and appropriate

challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate."

The emphasis needs to be on opening a dialogue, encouraging reflection and fostering growth and development, rather than on checking up on people, judging and labelling.

Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh go on to suggest that the coaching approach could be defined as:

"intentionally utilizing some of the transferable elements of formal coaching in a range of conversational situations that would not typically be considered coaching interactions"

And suggest that this might include:

- *a focus on learning, growing self-awareness and awareness of others personal responsibility*
- *two-way conversations*
- *focus on the coachee's agenda and self-direction*
- *the provision of both support and challenge*
- *emphasis on the present and future, rather than the past*

I was struck by the idea of a coaching culture focussing on the present and future rather than the past, and the use of these questions:

“We believe that a simple invitation to flip from ‘what’s not wanted?’ to ‘what’s wanted instead?’ is one small example of a key element of coaching – helping people focus on a positive outcome.”

Emphasising a problem-solving, solution-focussed approach, adopting a ‘How can we?’ rather than a ‘Why we can’t’ mindset and considering the Appreciative Inquiry model of searching for the bright spots, and learning from successes rather than fixating on ‘what is broken’, may move us forward.

I asked participants to consider examples of successful leadership they had experienced and to summarise what they felt were key to the most effective leadership. They suggested:

- Emotional intelligence
- Clear vision
- Leading by example
- Ability to listen and respond
- Visibility
- Knowing the team
- Showing humility.

We considered how these elements of leadership connect with what Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh suggest are key coaching skills:

- *Building trust*
- *Being present*

- *Listening actively*
- *Clarifying*
- *Empathising*
- *Being succinct*
- *Asking the best questions*
- *Giving feedback*

How can adopting a coaching approach help to strengthen our leadership, and why might effective leaders be disposed to develop a coaching culture within their teams? Can we make use of the principles of coaching as we support and challenge each individual (leaders at all levels, teaching staff, support staff and pupils) to be their best? Campbell and Nieuwerburgh suggest that leaders, working with individuals and with teams, can engage in and encourage productive dialogue:

“If we accept the view that schools are networks of people engaged in various forms of conversation designed to progress the purpose and goals of the school (Campbell, Coaching in schools, 2016) then the leader is a key person is setting the conversational tone.”

Building on the positives, I believe leaders can achieve much with the staff alongside whom and through whom they work. However, this requires a degree of trust and a willingness to see developing others as a key part of their responsibility. In 2017 I worked with Middle Leaders on a staff day where one Head of Department, having heard what I had to say



about the advantages of taking a coaching approach, said, “I don’t have time to do that. I’m an experienced Head of Department; I know what has to be done. I just need those in my department to do what I tell them to do.”

Mike Buchanan, formerly the head of Ashford School and now the Executive Director of HMC, has, I think, the best answer to this, from a piece he wrote for Leadership Matters in 2017:

“Step back from directing to coaching, because the former might get the job done, but the latter builds capacity and confidence.”

The job has to be done, but the best leaders focus not just on ensuring this is achieved, but that those they lead are developed in the process so that they are able to step up to

new challenges in the future. Leaders need to ensure that under their tenure the team they lead grows in strength. Consider the legacy you leave: are others stronger than you found them, or have you created a culture of dependency so the team risks falling apart when you aren’t there? How can you encourage those you lead to step up, have faith in their ability to cope (with your guidance and support) rather than expecting you to protect them, or to solve their problems for them, or always to tell them what they should do?

Leaders at all levels need to recognise that they are models, and one of the things they have to model is receptivity to feedback. I believe all school leaders should have a coach: a regular session of structured reflection which helps them to get their head above the parapet and take a breath.

References

- Campbell, J. and Van Nieuwerburgh, C. 2018. *Coaching in education: Getting better results for students, educators and parents*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin
- Knight, J. 2017. *The impact cycle: What good instructional coaches should do to foster powerful improvements in teaching*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin



A Whole School Approach To The Mental Health And Wellbeing Of Staff And Children

A Research Working Paper by Sarah Beveridge and Caroline Bligh

Abstract

This project addressed the interrelated issues in relation to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff and children in a small North Yorkshire Primary School through employing a focused whole school approach. The conception of this research project evolved through the Head Teacher of a small North Yorkshire Primary School collaborating with an experienced academic from Carnegie School of Education. Working closely with a health care professional (HCP) and senior HR adviser, the HCP developed and administered two surveys, analysed the results and prepared reports. Both the HCP and the HR advisor conducted staff interviews, including that of the Head Teacher, the collated responses, and prepared a report. The HR advisor subsequently led two coaching sessions with the senior staff. Throughout these three phases, the key people have communicated at all stages, reviewed and adapted where necessary.

Aims

This project aimed to address the interrelated issues in relation to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff and children in a small North Yorkshire Primary School through employing a focused whole school approach. The primary school (which joined an Academy Trust in May 2017) is a single form entry primary school (3-11) of 210 pupils based in the North of England. In response to DfE Workload Challenge 2015, the school introduced a revised marking and feedback policy which relieved teaching staff from submitting detailed weekly or daily teaching plans.

Research Question

In what way does adopting a 'whole school approach' support the mental health and wellbeing staff and pupils in a primary school?



National Context

Currently, teaching ranks highly as one of the most stressful occupations (Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2017) on work-related stress, depression and anxiety; with a large proportion of teachers reporting unmanageable workload and stress.

According to the Health and Safety Executive report (2017), teaching is one of the most stressful occupations with 2,460 cases of work-related stress per 100,000 workers (twice the average rate) during a 3-year period from 2014/15 to 2016/17. The DfE report 'Analysis of school and teacher level factors relating to teacher supply' (2017) cited that workload was the most frequent reason given by teachers (75% of 1,023) for leaving the profession. Unlike social workers or health care professionals, head teachers address emotional distressed staff, parents and children on a daily basis and yet receive no formal supervision or training.

Unsurprisingly, the issues of recruitment and retention in teaching continue to pose challenges to the profession, as highlighted in The House of Commons Education Committee 'Recruitment and retention of teachers' (2017). Its recommendations suggest that the Government should focus on evidence-based policies which might improve the retention of

high-quality teachers and for school leaders to promote a whole school culture of wellbeing.

There is a growing crisis in children's mental health with support services (The Guardian, June 2018) such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) unable to meet the increased demand for referrals. Despite this issue, schools both attempt, and are being required to offer on-going, immediate support and yet staff do not always have the skills to be effective. Initial good intentions may inadvertently exacerbate the problem as some staff may be struggling with their own stress and mental health concerns. This dilemma may impact negatively upon children in school; thus creating an impenetrable cycle of pressure and stress.

Initial project

The conception of this research project evolved through the Head Teacher of a small North Yorkshire Primary School collaborating with an experienced academic from Carnegie School of Education.

Working closely with a health care professional (HCP) and senior HR adviser, the



HCP developed and administered two surveys, analysed the results and prepared reports. Both the HCP and the HR advisor conducted staff interviews, including that of the Head Teacher, collated the responses, and prepared a report. The HR advisor subsequently led two coaching sessions with the senior staff. Throughout these three phases, the key people have communicated at all stages, reviewed and adapted where necessary.

As part of the Staff Wellbeing project, an initial, a pilot survey was distributed to all the staff at The Primary School in February 2018. Participation was voluntary, and all staff were included (senior leaders, teaching and support staff). In total, 21 staff completed the survey.

The aim of the survey was to gather baseline information from all staff regarding their view on the priority issues for staff wellbeing and to ask whether they had accessed any wellbeing support. The results were shared with the school team and the wider Academy of schools.

As part of the Staff Wellbeing strategy, the School held a Staff Wellbeing half day in April 2018 for all the staff across the academy. The programme has 4 wellbeing sessions including

Yoga, Complementary Therapies, Mindfulness and Resilience. The staff were able to book 2 sessions on the afternoon and the final evaluation of the day was very positive.

The Staff Wellbeing project included two phases in gathering information: Phase 1 Staff wellbeing online survey and Phase 2: semi-structured interviews with 10 members of staff and included all staff groups within the school (Senior Leadership team, qualified teachers, teaching assistants and support staff).

The interviewers were part of the academy research team on the project, and the interviews took place on 21 February 2018 at the Primary School. Although the research team includes the Head Teacher of the school, she voluntarily took part in the interviews. The Head Teacher did not take part in the analysis of the data. All staff within The team were invited to take part in the interviews and participation was voluntary. The staff who participated were asked to sign a consent form and each member of received a participant information sheet. All interview data was recorded by hand and no personal identifiable information was attached to the interview notes. Both interviewers removed any data which could identify the participant. Although digital recording is mentioned in the



consent form, none of the interviewers used digital recording. At the end of the project, all interview data will be stored securely in North Yorkshire County Council in accordance with council procedures.

The areas which were explored in the interviews included:

1. School culture and organisation
2. Expectations of staff in role
3. Perceived control over own role
4. Access and availability of own support network (professional and personal)
5. Staff perception of own workload
6. 10 statements about the school ethos and culture which asks staff to indicate their agreement using a 'Strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' scale
7. Additional comments or observations from staff members

Phase 1

Information gathering through:

- Initial anonymous and voluntary survey of all staff in school resulting in quantitative data which informed open staff discussions about ways forward.
- Longer, semi-structured interviews with all senior staff and other staff with a HCP or HR adviser. The resulting report was produced for whole staff discussion.

Phase 2

Actions taken:

- Coaching training for all senior staff.
- Specific and individual coaching for the Head Teacher.
- Training day focussing on staff health and well-being for all staff across the five schools in the MAT.

Phase 3

Evaluation by staff:

- Follow-up anonymous and voluntary survey for all staff in school. The resulting report then formed the basis of two open discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff.

What did we learn?

January 2018. Twenty staff completed the anonymous questionnaire which represented 57% of the school's workforce from a wide range of roles and length of time in post. The top four well-being issues were:

- managing stress,
- learning to relax,
- improving sleep and
- managing workload.



52% of the respondents had already accessed, or were considering accessing, well-being support and 85% would consider it in the future. 79% stated that mindfulness was their preferred well-being option and, although the staff would prefer individual appointments to discuss well-being, 62% preferred to have this held as part of a training day, rather than in the evening or at weekends.

February 2018.

During the longer interviews, similar concerns about school culture and expectation were raised by a number of people. All felt that the school had a generally supportive culture. However, its recent 'academisation' was felt by some to have increased pressure by accelerating the pace of change. This was perceived by many to be too rapid and that important information was not always communicated effectively to all staff.

Staff Narratives

One interviewee said, 'I don't feel part of the vision; we are told what it is'. Another interviewee said that her job, 'feels like a butterfly flitting from one thing to another with no time to see the impact.

The majority of staff believe that they have the necessary level of autonomy in their role but feel that this can sometimes be curtailed by the decisions taken by the MAT and those imposed by the national education system; 'if the data isn't good enough, we have to do it better'. The senior leadership staff believe that the focus on performance and data impacts on their freedom to act in their role.

It was recognised by most staff that the school encouraged autonomy, but this also created a sense of isolation and not all staff felt that their contributions were recognised or encouraged. They reported that a good work/life balance is difficult to achieve due to the hours they work in order to manage the demands of their job and alluded to feeling guilty when not working. Some support staff commented that they have been able to achieve a better work/life balance by deciding to move into a role with fewer responsibilities. Staff in part-time positions were more likely to report a greater satisfaction with their work/life balance but commented that this involved a conscious decision to undertake work on their days off.

Staff reported that the requirements of the teaching role are "mentally and physically



exhausting”, which can make it difficult to achieve a balance: “I am at capacity, just slightly above empty. It is hard to have a healthy lifestyle”. Some staff commented that at times they are their own worst enemy, “I can try too hard and perceive failure.

Requirements are difficult so I will never reach that success”. One person stated that it is difficult to take lunch breaks. Many staff feel that they are ‘just coping’ with lower energy and increased stress levels.

Teaching staff perceive that working at home in the evenings and at weekends is an essential part of the role, report that they routinely work beyond 5pm and often take work home.

They identified a range of areas that impact on wellbeing, with a strong focus on workload and pace of work, attendance at meetings, perceived expectation to get work done over weekends and holidays, and peak work periods such as report writing and preparation and reporting of data. A small number of staff questioned the relative value of some meetings, “I have other things that can be done in that time”.

Teachers reported levels of anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, inability to switch off, self-criticism, fluctuations in workload, poor sleep patterns, insufficient exercise and perceived levels of control.

Staff feel that the school is considerate of staff wellbeing and that there is good support from senior staff. However, some commented on the challenge of balancing staff wellbeing in the context of school priorities. This can mean that whilst the intention is there (as demonstrated in the wellbeing project and provision of personal support) it is sometimes hard to act upon it- “The headteacher is trying, but I don’t think it will have impact because it is an impossible job.”

Response to the survey and interviews.

March 2018. Senior staff had two sessions of coaching training (North Yorkshire HR) and began to implement it with each other. One member of staff said, ‘It has changed the dialogue that we have with everybody. It is all too easy to jump in with solutions but now the possibility of change, with help and support, is on the individual member of staff. Staff have agency to identify and address their own issues.’



April 2018. In response to staff's views, during the next training day, which involved all staff from each of the five schools within YCAT, afternoon well-being sessions were held which included yoga, aromatherapy, mindfulness, resilience and coaching. Feedback from these sessions was overwhelmingly positive, 'It was a lovely opportunity to take some 'me-time'. It made me feel valued as a member of staff.'

May 2018. In the report, several critical comments had been made about the headteacher which she found personally challenging. She requested some one-to-one coaching from HR as she knew that she had to process these and view them objectively before moving on to the next phase.

Staff views at the end of the project.

The final questionnaire was administered at the end of the school year, which possibly explains why there were only eleven responses. This still represents almost third of the workforce and so provides useful feedback.

Staff were asked which steps they had taken in response to the project to improve their own well-being. The top four responses were:

- working on their ability to switch off,
- taking the opportunity to exercise,
- spending time with family and friends and
- taking time to focus on their own well-being.

82% of the respondents said that they were planning to take more breaks and 54% said that they intended to take up more exercise. All the respondents said that they better understood the factors which affect their well-being, 81% said that they felt supported by the SLT and 72% believed that the SLT were implementing changes to support well-being. Staff again raised concerns over whole school planning, communication and clarity of roles.

In the final summer term, a follow up survey was sent to the staff at The School to evaluate the impact of the Staff Wellbeing project. 11 staff responded to the survey prior to the end of the school year. and the results are presented here.

Wider context

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 'Causes of Stress at Work' says that, 'There are six main areas that can lead to work-related stress if they are not managed



properly. These are: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change.

For example, employees may say that they:

- are not able to cope with the demands of their jobs
- are unable to control the way they do their work
- don't receive enough information and support
- are having trouble with relationships at work, or are being bullied
- don't fully understand their role and responsibilities
- are not engaged when a business is undergoing change.'

What next in school?

The staff have made clear that the main causes of workplace stress for them are the demands of whole school planning, communication and clarity of roles.

The challenge now for the leadership and management of the school is to maintain the project's momentum, action systemic change to address these fundamental concerns whilst continuing to improve the school.

There are a number of potential models which the school could adopt to provide a framework for change. The project has demonstrated the crucial importance of placing self-care and relationships at the heart of a school's well-being strategy. The PERMA model, developed by Martin Seligman and applied in many workplaces and academic institutions, could be the answer.

Outline of the PERMA model

Component	Implication for school staff
Positive emotions	Maintain staff 's own health and well-being and support and encourage them through modelling.
Engagement	Encourage autonomy without creating isolation. Include staff in creating the vision and for understanding the part that they play in it.
Relationships	Nurture the positive relationships which already exist in school but build on these through an incremental coaching model.
Meaning	Take time to explain why changes are necessary and desirable.
Accomplishment	Recognise and celebrate staff's achievements.



Conclusion

The approach taken by the project was to encourage open dialogue, even if that was sometimes uncomfortable for school leaders to hear.

Schools are complex and place high demands on their staff, where leaders are constantly having to *balance* competing, and often conflicting, expectations. High degrees of accountability have to be balanced with the physical, mental and emotional demands placed on employees. The increased expectations of the curriculum have to be balanced with children's prior experiences and learning. Autonomy for classroom teachers has to be balanced with the resulting feelings of isolation. Information sharing has to be balanced with unnecessary paperwork. Effective communication has to be balanced with fewer meetings and emails. Responsibility has to be balanced within a pay grade. Much has been written about teachers' stress and it may appear easy for school leaders to assume that they know the answers to the questions before they ask them.

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The project has clearly identified that staff health and well-being is influenced by the challenges of the job and the ability to manage stresses. Staff are now more aware of their own responsibility for their own well-being and school has done much to support this, through well-being sessions, offering follow-up mindfulness courses for staff and holding weekly yoga sessions in school. By opening up the discussion with staff in a safe and confidential environment, a more open culture has already emerged across the school. Staff have said that they now feel more able to say how they feel without fear of giving offence. There does however, remain more to be done. Of note, taking part in this collaborative project with Carnegie School of Education has had an all-round positive impact on my own personal health and wellbeing. It has assisted me greatly in identifying the best means by which I can support staff and colleagues.



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The Evolution of Coaching - Six Trends

A think piece working paper by Naomi Ward and Val Stevenson

Val Stevenson is a Senior level business coach and leads the coaching team for 'The Art of Work.' The Art of Work is a community of people experts blending the scientific, the academic and the practical to help individuals and teams master the workplace.

Naomi Ward is a coach, facilitator and founder at Education Connected. In her work she partners teachers to return to their core purpose and clarify their values. With this self-awareness, it's possible to become a powerful leader in work and life.

Naomi writes:

The basis of this article is a conversation between Val and myself inspired by 'The Art of Work's' research into how coaching is evolving, the forces that are shaping the profession and the imperative to stay relevant in order to succeed.

The conversation was focused across different sectors and industries: my intention is to explore some future trends and identify the

relevance for those of us working in education.

1. Blending Expertise and Disciplines

At just thirty years old, the coaching industry has contradictory personalities. It is an established (although not yet regulated) professional, set in its ways, arguably too reliant on tried and tested tools, techniques and frameworks. At the same time, it's an ambitious, bright-eyed millennial, gaining the confidence to break the rules. It's this rule-breaking persona that promises to disrupt the old and drive forward future trends for those that are prepared to step away from some of the established biases and traditions of coaching.

The first shift Val and I discussed is that coaches are more confidently blending their skills and consciously integrating expertise from other disciplines. Assimilating tools from counselling models, leadership theory, somatics, emotional intelligence and team effectiveness are the tip of the iceberg. Successful coaches will anticipate their clients' needs and respond creatively.



This is acknowledged in an article by David Goldsmith, 'Great Coaches Break the Rules:'

Most long-standing coaches not only fluidly and fluently dance between the distinctions of coaching, consulting, counselling, and training, they also are constantly customising solutions and approaches for their clients from an eclectic and deep repertoire of methods, processes and skills.

Choice Magazine, September 2017

Consequently, the lines between mentoring, coaching, counselling and facilitation will be blurred, driven by the context of a fast-moving world and increasingly sophisticated clients who know what they want.

2. Agility and Technology

For some time, coaching has been available mainly to the those at the top of the organisational pyramid, hence the term Executive coaches. But these days, as Val puts it, 'the term executive coach is old hat. I stopped calling myself that some time ago – I am fundamentally a coach that works with leaders and others.' It is complacent to believe that because 'this is the way we do things,' the old structures will endure. Agile

players are about accessibility and appealing to a wider pool of clients by dodging barriers such as bloated fees and unwieldy programme structures.

Of course, technology is a driver. Val draws a parallel with the 'Uber' model: you have an app in your pocket that provides you with a trustworthy cab at the edge of the pavement within minutes. Why not have the 'uber coach'? As younger generations become fluent in their grasp of coaching - they will expect it on demand: 'I'm stuck and need a coach now.' After a 20 minute conversation that fits with their schedule, they have clarity and are able to progress. In fact, organisations like this already exist - look at 'BetterUp' or 'Thrive' as examples - democratising coaching through mobile technology at all levels of an organisation.

Taking this idea further, coach, Brad Federman, from F&H Solutions group in writes about the 'rise of the automated coach':

Coaches will engage clients through micro-learning sessions, gamification and will add value by providing clients access to content beyond their counsel.

Forbes.com



As well as being available on demand, coaches and coaching agencies will provide more value by using technology to deliver quality, interactive content to embed the learning within the coaching dialogue. The subscription business model is booming and a 'micro-learning' programme lends itself to just that, while simultaneously building a supportive, networked community. Val puts that in the context of the evolving model at 'The Art of Work: 'we are being asked by our clients to create a package of coaching which the individual can access as and when they need it rather than the more traditional model of six sessions over six months. We're open to deliver what people need rather than what fits our business model.'

3. Transformation and Responsibility:

The acronym VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) was initially used by the US army in the 90s but has been appropriated to describe the tumultuous business world. It's also an accurate reflection of our political landscape and in this context, we can feel uncertain, lost and pessimistic.

As coaches and leaders, there is a responsibility to engage with this world and stand up for what we believe in by living and

communicating our own values and purpose. Values connect us, and if we act in service of them, we are acting for the benefit of each other and the greater good. In a world where the challenges are frightening and seemingly insurmountable, this compass of purpose and values is needed more than ever.

In 'The Future of Coaching -Vision, Leadership and Responsibility in a Transforming World' Hetty Enzig writes about the weight of making decisions in a world where so much feels out of control:

Humans are not designed to think that big - to act in the light of planetary awareness. It can feel grandiose, foolish, over-dramatising. However, at some level our clients know that acting in line with an ethically and globally aware agenda is imperative if there is to be a viable future for business, people and planet.

Hetty Enzig, The Future of Coaching, 2018

Values and purpose driven leadership is needed more than ever as we take responsibility for the choices we make and the impact that they will have today, tomorrow and for future generations. Coaches have the privilege of partnering individuals and organisations as they transform and take responsibility. Coaches



are ideally placed to challenge leaders to be accountable not just for their own actions but for the actions of their organisations.

4. Open engagement with Mental Health support in the workplace

The statistics around mental health show us that one in four people will experience a mental health problem over course of a year. We know that 40% of men aged 18-45 have considered committing suicide and that suicide is the biggest cause of death in the UK for men under 45. Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety with the ages of 35-60 being the most anxious years. With the prevalence of mental health problems, it's likely that many coaches and clients are struggling even if they choose not to disclose it.

In his book 'Lost Connections', Johann Hari argues that depression is not an illness that can be reliably cured medically, instead it is a longing for connection to self and community:

What if depression is, in fact, a form of grief—for our own lives not being as they should? What if it is a form of grief for the connections we have lost, yet still need?

Johann Hari, Lost Connections

This links to the World Health Organisation's revised definition of mental disorders:

Depression is a disease of the heart, but in the metaphorical sense, and above all, it is a disease of the mind, spirit, body and emotions, intimately affected by where we live and how we live and with whom we live.

World Health Organisation, 2011

Problems with our mental health and wellbeing are becoming increasingly common because of the way we live and work. Coaches have a role to play in creating and holding a space where individuals and companies can choose to be more open and no longer fear the stigma of mental illness. With this transparency comes permission to learn, provide relevant support and create compassionate working cultures.

This nuance is in contrast to a perception of coaching as a tool which focuses on the positive. What do you want? What's your dream? What if anything was possible? What's your best future? If you are a client with anxiety or depression, these questions might be impossible. As coaches, perhaps we can be more confident to be in the shadows with our clients and understand that in order to re-engage people with a true sense of self



and purpose which may be lost for now, it's necessary to be in the dusk and spend some time there. Hetty Enzig writes, 'our very task is to light a candle in the darkness.'

Perhaps it is this place where true meaning, connection and purpose arises. Once we find the treasure in the cave we fear, despair and depression cease to overwhelm us. Val says, 'we know that having someone to talk to is one of the most helpful interventions in mental ill health, whether it's temporary or long term. As coaches we need to use our skills and knowledge in this space. At the Art of Work we have been following the Being Human movement. Designing a world where people come first is a tricky encounter; there are so many barriers and obstacles that get in the way: government, politics, we don't have the time. But if we stop and think it can and does fall into place if you put people first.'

5. Systemic Coaching

In Val's work systemic coaching is increasingly in demand. If anyone has read Peter Hawkins they will understand the importance of systemic coaching, particularly around coaching teams. One of the earliest lessons in building coaching skills is the necessity of looking at the context in which the individual

operates ie: the wider organisation. Systemic coaching looks at the person as part of a wider system. You could say it's an evolving coaching principle, not new, not always applied but one that is very much fit for purpose. It's easy to get hung up on its complexity but it does enable transformation. Rather than focussing on the development of the individual (or team) it is about focusing on the whole system and the individual or team's role within it.

In Hawkins terminology:

- What the individual or team must deliver; Commissioning
- How individuals engage with key stakeholders/building the right relationships/networking; Connecting
- What's my purpose/why am I doing what I'm doing and how do I do it; Clarifying
- How do I work with others/why do I work with others; Co-creating
- And at the centre is what you're learning as all this is going on – this is the space that the coach operates within. Helping the individual or team make connections across the four disciplines and take account of their actions; Core Learning

Not an easy model to follow but one that fits today's complex world whatever sector you



work in. When it starts to come together things visibly shift.

6. Integration of coaching into other roles

Individuals have a better understanding of how fast the business world is changing and how easy it is to become obsolete, so they recognise the need to take time and invest in their own development. Generally, people are better at seeking feedback, trying new things, and reflecting on what they're learning and how they need to change. These are some of the things that they might have sought from a coach in the past. Individuals can turn to their peers, their manager, HR, their friends and colleagues—many of whom are trained in coaching skills—to get advice and counsel. This is great and as coaches we have all invested time in building coaching skills in others. The speed and extent to which coaching skills have been adopted in business has been dramatic, resulting in the routine training of leaders and line managers in coaching skills. The idea of a coaching culture emerged as an antidote to command and control. This is all well and good but where does this leave the professional coach – do we just become the trainer of other coaches? Clearly not.

A model I have become deeply immersed in over the last couple of years is the FACTS model developed by John Blakey and Ian Day, in their words,

'Be the missing voice of challenge in the coaching conversation. Swallow hard and break the collective trance of the cosy club to reconnect senior leaders with reality through, specific, direct, and concrete interventions. Get up close with the future leaders to inspire them to pursue courageous goals – not in the service of individual egos, but toward a broader collective purpose.' (Challenging Coaching, John Blakey and Ian Day)

Closing thoughts; joining the dots in education

The Art of Work is operating primarily in the private sector; our contexts are different but there are parallels and relevance in these trends. It is certainly a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world for teachers and leaders, as recognised by the ASCL Ethical Leadership Commission which is setting up a framework for ethical leadership. Carolyn Roberts, the Commission Chair, asks this question:

“The nation trusts us to form young people into the best that they can be. The public expects us to know what kind of example we should set them, but do we? How do we know what’s right or wrong?”

www.ascl.org.uk

Here is the context of ‘responsibility,’ a value that coaches must also live by in order to support leaders with their accountability to an ethical framework, both personal and professional, in challenging times.

Certainly, I can envisage coaches blending their skills to meet changing needs. Anyone with half an eye on Twitter in January this year would have read hundreds of tweets expressing anxiety and dread before the looming return to work. We were struck by, but not altogether surprised by, a story reported by the BBC, ‘I wanted to crash my car to avoid teaching.’ The article reads:

As teachers prepare to head back to the classroom after the Christmas holidays, the National Education Union has described the situation as "an epidemic of stress.

BBC News

As we know, the factors behind such stress are complex, but the need for teachers to

have a place to air their worries is real and already addressed by organisations such as the Education Support Partnership Helpline. But I firmly believe that coaches and training providers have a role in creating a safe space for teachers to be heard and not judged, as well as playing a part in shifting the lingering stigma of mental illness.

Another future trend that is present and evolving in education, is systemic coaching. Much of the coaching I do with teachers deals with issues stemming from difficult relationships and managing dysfunctional teams. It appears that more time could be invested and subsequently recouped in creating a functioning team using a conscious and collaborative process. There is also the potential for coaching to build productive relationships across teams: the governing body and a SLT for example.

The process of interviewing Val and exploring these trends has encouraged me to build connections with coaching practitioners in diverse sectors in order to continue the conversation.

In business coaching has been a valued tool for forty years while it is a relatively young practice in education. It is imperative to listen



to teachers first in order to provide relevant support, yet we can anticipate the needs of complex organisations like schools and

universities by nurturing a dialogue with other coaching communities.

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Mentoring primary trainee teachers: what can we learn from Japan?

A research working paper by Mary Briggs

Abstract

As part of a collaborative research project between Oxford Brookes School of Education (OBU) and the Kyoto University of Education (KUE) researchers from both institutions observed the practices of mentoring in each other's contexts. The purpose was to see if insights leading to improvements at each institution could be gained by learning from the advantages and disadvantages of each system. For England at a time of concerns about recruitment and retention the practices in Japan offered a different approach that is worthy of consideration and could allow for greater support for trainees in England as they develop their teacher identity.

Teacher training in Japan

To enter teacher training much is expected of the perspective students, ability to sing and play a musical instrument as well as speaking English and swimming a given distance. The students have a main subject which they are expected to teach at both primary and secondary levels of schooling. At KUE, trainees do their practical training at schools attached to the university, pass the teacher recruitment examination before they graduate and become teachers. They are hired when they graduate. At KUE, the period of teaching practice at the affiliated school is a

main practicum is 5 weeks long and the secondary practicum is 2 weeks. Teacher trainees at KUE engage in the practicum as short-term, practicing students. Each student is placed with others 3-4 in one class working with the teacher for their main placement.

The students are introduced to the whole school (staff and children) as student teachers and welcomed into the institution and part of the learning community. This is a significant difference between Japan and England as student teachers and teachers are not treated any differently by other members of the community in Japan. When the students are not teaching or observing the teacher teaching they are supporting the student who is teaching and observing both the children and their fellow student. During each week a trainee's lesson is the focus of the discussion at the end of each day. There is no specific format to the sessions and so it is up to the class teacher mentor to choose the starting point. For example, one group started with feedback from the other students in the class to the colleague they have observed. The class teachers generally facilitate the discussion

rather than leading and do not give direct feedback in the early stages of the discussion.

On other occasions a critical incident becomes the focus with the group problem solving around this event unpacking what did it mean, how should they respond to the event and what might they do in future. The intention is that the group collectively share the issues from the observation positive as well as areas for development exploring options and problem solving together. The skilled class teacher/mentor asks questions of the group guiding their discussion. There are no checklists of teachers' standards to address and reports to complete on the observed teaching so although class teachers give their time after the children have gone home there is no paperwork to complete. Each student makes notes from the discussion and is expected to use the discussions to develop their practice in the classroom.

The establishment of a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1989) in the school and in the class facilitates sharing of ideas and feedback as a result of the way the students are introduced into the school and the ways of working with their smaller groups in the classrooms. Barab and Duffy (2000) link

communities of practice with mentoring through a consideration of the role of teachers not just to impart the content but to facilitate, model, mentor, and scaffold the pupils' learning. They go on to discuss the same process for teacher trainees, where the mentors' model for them so they can then be mentored towards the skills they will need to teach. During the placement (practicum) the students are observed once formally by a University member of staff and that becomes their grade for the module and at this point they do receive formal written feedback as well as an oral summary of the features of their teaching.

The feedback on lessons in this formal context focused predominately on subject knowledge rather than pedagogic skills development. Another key feature is the open lesson where anyone can observe a lesson taught by a student teacher on placement. This may involve a large number of observers in the classroom whilst a student teaches. A lesson plan is placed at one end of the class on a table with paper for any comments and any of the observers may leave a comment about what they have seen. Although this might appear daunting because of potentially large numbers of observers in practice this is just one aspect of the students work within the



school's learning community. The end of the practicum is marked by a ceremony with the whole school in which the children sing to the students' teachers and they sing back praising each other's involvement in the learning process. The whole process of the placement element of the teacher training reinforces the benefits of professional discussion within a group. This appears to seamlessly move into the professional development focus in Japan using the lesson study which builds of the ideas about collaboration and collective professional dialogues about developing practice.

Teacher training in England

Over the last ten years different routes have been designed to allow people to train as teachers in Universities, SCITT, Teach First and School Direct. All these still operate around a student teacher taking responsibility for a class on a solo basis if not at the beginning of their training towards the end and this is seen as a measure of their success. Some of this is driven by the need to achieve all the Teachers' Standards demonstrating their competence. Although there are programmes that operate paired placements predominantly these were introduced to alleviate placement shortages rather than underpinned by a pedagogic rationale. Paired

placements do have advantages of sharing practice though when they are often positioned at the start of programmes pairings can be mismatched because of limited knowledge of the students. A small number of organisations have used larger numbers in one school for either a focus on a curriculum area such as phonics or, so students can acquire opportunities to work with specific groups of children e.g. EAL. So, the vast major of placements Oxford Brookes included mean that one student teacher is placed in one primary or early years class. The students are keen to demonstrate their abilities with a class against the Teachers' Standards over periods between 5 and 8 weeks in length.

These students spend much more time in schools than their Japanese counterparts. The dominant mentoring relationship is between the class teacher mentor and the student teacher as they work together. Feedback on the students' teaching from their mentors is usually in both oral and written form once a week. Feedback has a tendency to focus more on classroom and behaviour management than subject knowledge. Systems also include paperwork against the standards for both mentors and students to complete as part of the quality assurance process. Providers also



have a visiting teacher who monitors each placement procedures. Student teachers are often concerned about how they will be viewed if they are introduced as a student even in a primary classroom because of potential taunts of 'You are not a real teacher'. Student teachers feel under pressure to perform independently in the classroom as an early finished article to enter the profession.

Although continuing professional development is available throughout a teacher's career in England much of this is again focused on the individual. Lesson study has been introduced in England but without the earlier collaborative mentoring as in Japan. Changes are coming with the early career framework to support teachers in their first few years of teaching as a response to the recruitment and retention crisis in England.

Reflections

As a group of teacher educators at KUE and OUB the sharing of practices enabled a dialogue about the different approaches to teacher training and mentoring processes.

Japanese colleagues liked the structured of our teachers Standards as a focus for discussion and developed their own checklist which they have been trialling. Through having the opportunity to see how a different model operates in relation to mentoring student teachers allow for professional and personal reflections upon the system which dominates in England. There are obvious cultural differences to consider and model employed elsewhere do not immediately transfer contexts. However, for me this experience raised questions about the longer-term impact of our methods of training on newly qualified teachers which may indicate some of the reasons why they leave the profession in the first five years.

Does the group training in Japan allow for a greater development of a community of practice and therefore support for the student teachers? In Japan this appears to move seamlessly into the only form of CPD that is available 'lesson study'. Does the solo experience in England push students to become the self-reliant teacher too quickly and could this explain the drop out from teaching in the first 5 years in the England?



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The Teachers' Standards

A think piece working paper by Matt Burnage

For anyone who has been involved in ITT, it's impossible to ignore the ubiquity of the Teachers' Standards. In many training courses, they're everywhere. For many, the Standards are one of the most memorable parts of their training year, countless hours spent trying to meet targets linked to specific standards, ensuring that lesson plans are clearly labelled with them, and collecting various forms of evidence to prove that they have been met. In their NQT year, many go through the same process again, meticulously demonstrating how they have met each Standard, printing and filing evidence of parents' evenings, markbooks, extra-curricular activities and duties covered.

None of this, of course, is what the Standards exist for. Their primary function is to act as a barrier for entry to the profession, an aim which is clearly set out in the DfE guidance:

'The [teachers'] standards define the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status'

This is an entirely sensible aim – having a common bar of entry helps to ensure that there is a minimum standard in the quality of teaching nationally, and it also serves an important function in providing a measure of professionalism to which teachers are accountable. However, rather than functioning as a benchmark for entry to the profession, they have quickly become its heart and soul. They have become the basis for grading lessons, been distorted into a progression model, and are used to brutally cut across subject-specificity, in a way that has had a highly problematic impact on the quality of teacher training.

The Standards as grades

The first problem is posed by how the Standards are used to grade teachers. The vast majority of ITT courses use the Standards to grade students at the end of their course, and many also grade their trainees on a termly basis. Some go yet further, insisting on giving a grade for every Standard every lesson. With such importance placed on this, the



Standards very quickly become the main focus of a trainee's practice.

This is significantly driven by the Ofsted framework for inspecting ITE providers, which sets out clear expectations of seeing *'the record of evidence against the minimum level of practice expected of teachers as defined in the Teachers' Standards'*. To add to the pressure, there is a clearly set out expectation that Outstanding providers prove that *'trainees demonstrate excellent practice in the majority of the standards for teaching'*. This, necessarily, requires assessing trainees against individual Standards.

There is no requirement, however, to grade individual lessons, or even to provide a specific grade. Given that over the last few years the teaching profession has started to call into question the practice teachers being graded as part of their performance management, it seems at odds with our conception of good practice that this remains an implicit requirement of the Ofsted ITE framework. Not only does this cause undue stress for trainees who already have more than enough to worry about in the classroom, the practice of grading obfuscates – for both trainees and mentors – what needs to be

done in order to improve. The focus becomes about getting up to a 'good' grade according to the Standards, rather than thinking about steps that could more meaningfully improve practice.

'We need some evidence...'

This focus on grading trainees according to the Standards leads directly to another problem. Either as trainees, mentors or eavesdroppers in the staff room, at some point in our careers we've all heard the phrase 'we need some evidence for TS...' Rather than spending time practising questioning or teacher talk, trainees are sent on a quest to amass evidence. Of course, the idea of evidence in itself is no problem – if the Standards are fulfilling their intended role as a benchmark for entry to the profession, then at some point there's going to come a point where we need evidence that they have been met, be it a comment from a mentor, or some collected documents.

What we have instead ended up with is trainees collecting huge dossiers of evidence, multiple lever-arch files of signed emails that they have helped out with a parents evening, lesson plans that set out precisely how they differentiated for a particular Pupil Premium



student, and countless print outs from training sessions. Particularly when deadlines loom, trainees' weekly targets quickly start to focus on collecting evidence that they have 'promoted a culture of high expectations', rather than thinking about how to do so. Once again, we find ourselves losing sight of what teacher training should actually be about – becoming a good practitioner.

The Standards as a progression model

The phenomenon of grading trainees leads to the training year becoming more about moving from 'satisfactory' to 'outstanding' than it is about developing as a practitioner. This is particularly problematic because of the way in which the Standards have been distorted into level descriptors. It takes only a quick Google search to find numerous examples of this, with each Standard subdivided into four – or in some cases seven or eight – different 'levels'.

Where the Standards' become our road map for improvement, we start to place too much value on surface-level features that are highly visible, rather than the thinking and methods that we know underpins good practice. We find ourselves viewing improvement practice

through the lens of vacuous, generic statements which cannot get to the heart of what good teaching really looks like. To take an example from a (random) set of level descriptors I found, the difference between 'outstanding' and 'good' in (one section) of TS4 is as shown on the next page:

If this is our progression model, what targets does it lead us to set a trainee if we want to get them from 'good' to 'outstanding'? 'Impart more knowledge'? 'Consider how to impart knowledge more consistently'? 'Use lesson time more effectively'? Such comments fail to encapsulate what progress actually looks like, and confuse a summative tool with formative targets. We are left with targets that aren't really helpful in getting a trainee to make meaningful improvements to their practice, forcing them to focus only on the most visible features of their teaching.



Sub-headings of the Standards	Outstanding <i>Much of quality of Student Teacher's teaching over time is outstanding and never less than consistently good</i>	Good <i>Much of the quality of Student Teacher's teaching over time is good,; some is outstanding.</i>
4.1) Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time.	Consistently and effectively imparts knowledge and develops understanding through using lesson time to great effect.	Much of the time imparts knowledge and develops understanding through using lesson time to good effect.

Of course, the best mentors keep the bigger picture in mind when setting targets, setting meaningful targets that focus on making the small improvements that a trainee needs to make in the short-term in order to achieve the long-term goal of meeting the benchmark of the Standards. Such mentors recognise the complex interaction between the Standards, and interact with them holistically – something that Chris Chivers has previously written about the benefits of (2018). Considering the Standards in this way makes it much easier to avoid setting reductive targets. Unfortunately, this falls victim to the requirement that training providers demonstrate that they are supporting their weakest trainees. In order to prove that this is happening, there first needs to be some method of identifying who these trainees are, and secondly, proving that they are progressing as a result of this support. This inexorably leads us back to a progression model based on grading trainees, and one that leaves us wide open to the greatest threat of all.

The threat of genericism

Treating the Teachers' Standards as a progression model and the exemplar or good practice forces ITT into genericism. The Teachers' Standards all too easily become a blunt instrument that cuts haphazardly across all that which makes a discipline unique.

Trainees are forced to spend their first year in the profession working on targets that focus primarily on the most visible, generic features of their practice, at the cost of engaging with their subject communities about how to get students thinking meaningfully about change and continuity, or how to get them using the conceptual language needed to analyse causation. It's no surprise that this produces teachers who have to reinvent the wheel during their early career.

Part of this is the result of the inherent difficulty of encapsulating what good teaching looks like. Nicola Crossley (2018) has argued that the difficulties posed by any attempts at

conceptualising professionalism are a significant barrier to effective and meaningful use of the Standards, particularly in a profession where there is a significant tension between autonomy and accountability. It is, perhaps, an over-emphasis on the latter - particularly in the form of the Ofsted ITE framework - that has distorted the role that the Standards were intended to play in establishing and maintaining professionalism.

What do we do?

So, what do we do? To be clear, this isn't a critique of any particular individual or institution. There are also brilliant mentors across the country who work incredibly hard to focus on what matters whilst operating within the limits imposed by the over-emphasis on the Teachers' Standards that they have to contend with. However, there remains much to be done. The new Early Career Framework provides us with an opportunity to fundamentally rethink how we

approach the early years of teaching, both in the training and NQT year. To make the most of this, we need subject communities to take a greater role in the provision of teacher training and mentoring, to provide both the expertise and institutional memory to prevent ourselves from reinventing the wheel. We also need a broader conversation about what we want teacher training to achieve, and how to consider the Teachers' Standards in relation to this, to ensure that they are fulfilling their intended function.

And we need to remember what the Teaching Standards are for. They're a benchmark for entry to the profession, and nothing else. And that's fine.

Matt presented this paper at ResearchED Birmingham, on March 2nd based on his blog published here

<https://inthenameofrigour.wordpress.com/>

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Seeing and framing teacher mentoring through the lens of knowledge practices

A research working paper by Richard Pountney

Abstract

In this paper I draw on empirical work I have been involved in since 2016, involving over 1200 teacher mentors, to discuss a key issue that has arisen – the professional knowledge required to mentor effectively. This work includes the development of a curriculum for training school-based mentors of trainee and newly qualified teachers, *Enhance your Mentoring Skills*, delivered regionally across South Yorkshire (Pountney and Grasmeyer, 2018), as well as nationally for mentors of mid-career teachers on the Chartered Teacher programme of the Chartered College of Teaching. I begin by discussing briefly what is known about teachers' mentoring practices, and understandings of what constitutes professional knowledge. Next, I discuss the nature of mentor teachers' learning for practice, and the difficulties inherent in articulating this to themselves, and to others. I illustrate this with examples, to show how the problem can be differentiated in two dimensions of meaning: the first is closeness to context (semantic gravity) and the second is the degree of conceptual complexity (semantic density). Finally, I discuss the need for a specialised language for mentoring and how this can promote the professional status of mentors, as well as building knowledge about, and for, effective mentoring practice.

Introduction

The importance of mentoring in teachers' professional development is well recognised (Hobson et al., 2009) and was singled out for 'needing much greater status and recognition' by the Carter Review (2015) of initial teacher education in England, leading to the development of the national standards for school-based mentors (DfE, 2016). The urgency to respond to this is heightened by calls in the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019) for 'fully trained mentors'. However, there is a considerable variation in the quality of training programmes, with a predominant emphasis on induction (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011), leading to claims that mentoring is 'a practice which is ill-defined, poorly conceptualized and weakly theorized' (Colley, 2003, p.13). While the material arrangements for mentoring, and how they vary greatly between schools, affects the practical conditions for mentoring, it is the socio-political ones that can shape the relationships between mentors and mentees. As important, however, are the different meanings of 'mentoring' and how they are 'interpreted



and justified' (Kemmis et al., 2014, p.155) that, combined with the material and socio-political, constitute mentoring as a form of social practice. What mentors do, what they say and how they relate is informed by these meanings and how they emerge and are sustained in practice. This meanings perspective on mentoring knowledge (the know that and know how) is informed by the extensive fieldwork in my research.

The link between teaching and mentoring

The calls within the field to identify the knowledge base for teaching (and mentoring) highlight the importance of mentoring in a teaching career. Often overlooked here is the notion that teachers in mentoring contexts are themselves learners, in which they 'struggle to maintain their confidence in an ever-shifting, demanding, and new professional role' (Hall et al., 2008, p.330). Evaluations of the Enhance your Mentoring Skills course (see <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/mentorshoooc>) show considerable gains in mentors' confidence levels in knowledge and skills resulting from the development of a curriculum mapped to the mentor standards (Pountney and Grasmeyer, 2018). This is a form of professional learning that is underpinned by a developmental model of mentoring (Furlong

and Maynard, 1995). We need to examine what is being developed and how.

Knowledge for mentoring and how it develops

A relatively unchallenged rationale for how teachers learn to teach is the idea of being 'in practice', in which student teachers acquire practical knowledge or the know-how of professional knowledge by iterative involvement in planning, teaching and review. Experience as the bridge to practice knowledge is central here, and the assumption that by being exposed to novel situations teachers will develop practical wisdom, characterised as the tacit know how held by experts. The parallel with how mentors develop their practice is striking, with many respondents in our research reporting learning to mentor 'on the job', and far too often with minimal teaching experience themselves. While many teachers in our research cite the value of thinking and talking about their own practice in order to guide that of the mentee, this often relies on a form of 'making sense' of practice, much of which takes a 'common sense' form of explanation of action that otherwise remains tacit.

Collins (2011) challenges the notion of tacit knowledge, suggesting that it is possible to



differentiate between what can, and what cannot, be made explicit. When mentors make judgements on what is and what is not good practice for example, they apply a form of tacit understanding of practice that they are called upon to articulate to the mentee in feedback, and/or in a written report. Points for improvement arising from this evaluation are a synthesis of the mentor's expertise, realised in a form that the mentee can

interpret as shown in this excerpt of a typical exchange below:

Table 1: Exchange 1 - between mentor and mentee (excerpts)

Process / Stage	Exchange
1. Describe what happened	<p>Mentor: <i>'We are going to talk about your last lesson, what I would like to do is go through what you think happened, talk about your strengths and talk about your areas of development. ..., how did you think the students made progress, is it the progress you expected, and what is your resumé of what happened?'</i></p> <p>Mentee: <i>'I don't think it went particularly well, and I don't think the class made as much progress as I would like ... I feel they are very low in confidence, they are low ability and I feel I didn't properly scaffold, and for that reason I think I am a little bit disappointed'</i> <i>[mentor asks what went well]</i></p>
2. Ask about a critical incident and responds to mentee's analysis	<p>Mentee: <i>'When they didn't understand some of them did ask questions and say 'Miss, can you explain a little bit more...'</i> <i>[mentor confirms her version of what she saw and the challenging nature of the class]</i></p> <p>Mentor: <i>'The thing I was especially impressed with was that, although the lesson didn't go according to plan you actually noticed that and tried to deal with it. I really liked that you picked up that the students were struggling [shows the mentee the lesson materials] ... and I feel that they were a little confused by the language ... what do you think happened after that?'</i></p>
3. Direct the mentee towards future action	<p>Mentee: <i>'As soon as you left the room, I thought the words were far, far too difficult, and if I go back to the start of the lesson, I don't think I got out of them what the idea of [topic] was. Which was what the lesson was supposed to be about'</i></p>
4. Action-plan changes to practice	<p>Mentor: <i>'I think you are right, there was quite a lot of confusion around the wording ... so if you were going to teach the lesson again what could you do to make progress'</i> <i>[Mentee articulates what she would do differently]</i> <i>[Mentor and mentee meet later to confirm actions]</i></p>
5. Follow up to check and confirm targets	



Leaving aside the dialogic tactics that the mentor skilfully uses to direct the mentee to examine her own practice, notable in Exchange 1 is the closeness to context, and the practicalities of practice. Maton (2013) refers to this as a strong form of *semantic gravity*, (SG - the relative context dependency of meaning). The mentee talks about her concrete actions, how the class asked questions, and her preparation. The mentor introduces various concepts including 'progress', and the 'language' of the lesson. One analysis of this point in the exchange is a weakening of the semantic gravity (becoming

more abstract) and a strengthening of what Maton conceptualises as semantic density (SD - the relative complexity of meanings). For example, the notion of 'progress' is dense and abstracted because it references not only the pupils' learning but has inferences of monitoring and testing of their work. In this sense, the mentor's use of the word 'progress' is quite vague and circumspect (it is mainly tacit) and its broader inferences may be lost on the mentee. Now compare this to Exchange 2, below, between a senior mentor and a group of mentors talking about how to stretch and challenge mentees:

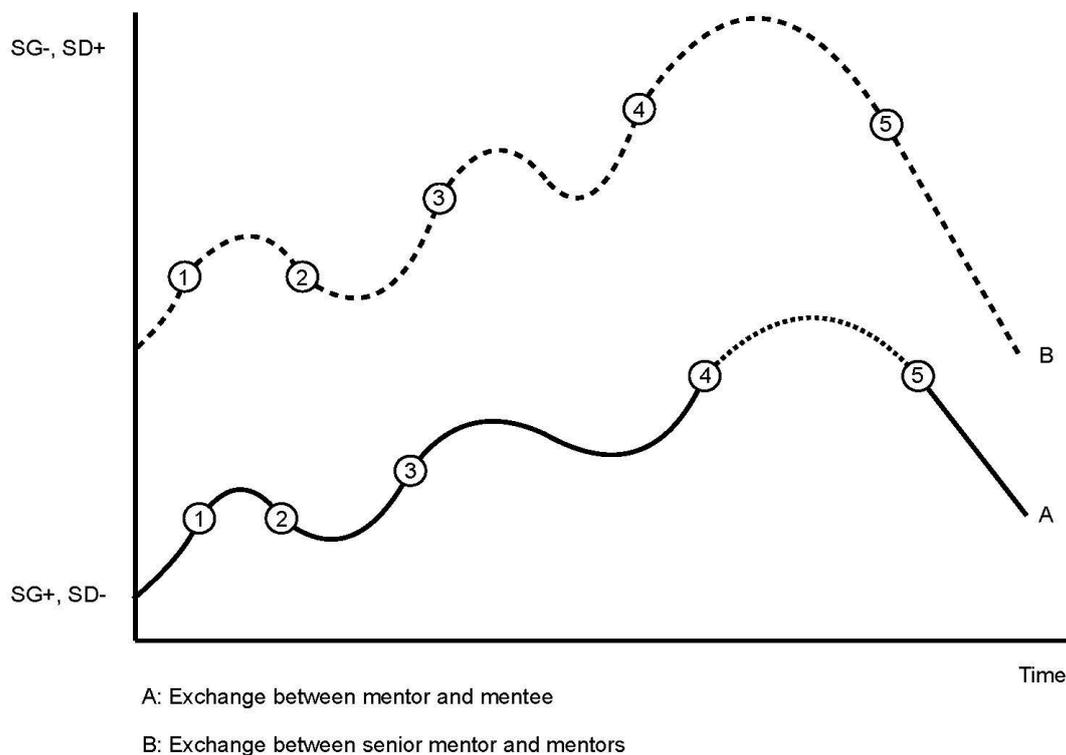
Table 2: Exchange 2 - between senior mentor and mentors (excerpts)

Process / Stage	Exchange
1. Introduce the problem	Senior mentor: <i>'So with strategies to stretch and challenge, it needs that planning at the beginning ...'</i>
2. Elaborate the problem, drawing on specific instances	Mentor 1: <i>'With the boys' attainment, actually speaking to the mentee first, and finding out what their opinion is, and what strategies work ...so they have a clear idea of where they are starting from ...'</i> Mentor 2: <i>'Starting from the perspective that the trainee is potentially a talented future teacher, because of the systems of protocols that you as a mentor, and as a school are in action, if you then want to stretch and challenge them, by taking the shackles off, doesn't make sense at all ... our role changes from being from a driver and director to being a facilitator in the acting out, they are now the doer, in the complete sense, but it is that unconscious behind the scenes, pulling of the strings ... and we need to protect them'</i>
3. Abstract and model the problem	Mentor 3: <i>'For me personally its putting them in the driving seat ... to be actually, the thinker and the doer and the deliverer, because that's the reality of what we do every day... and it can be stabilisers on, or stabilisers off, and that's where we come in, in our own judgement, but that has had the biggest impact, and you can tell a lot about a teacher's capacity if they can do the juggling with many things. We are often the 'mayor' of our classrooms, that's where the practice is, and that's where the majority of their learning is ...'</i>
4. Elaborate the model using specialised language (metaphor)	Senior Mentor: <i>'So what I am hearing is, push them out of that comfort zone, and saying to them, look you can be even better tomorrow than you are today'</i>
5. Return to problem and action plan	

In Exchange 2 we can observe a less-gradual decrease in semantic gravity (the conversation becomes more abstract and further from context more quickly) and a steeper increase in semantic density (there is a more rapid rise in the complexity of the language used), before the senior mentor brings it back to concrete practice - what to say and what they ask mentees to do (significant here, also, is that the senior mentor does not re-articulate the key ideas as tangible concepts). I have plotted these two exchanges on a timeline as 'semantic waves' in Figure 1 below. The solid line A shows Exchange 1 and the dashed line B indicates Exchange 2, and the numbers on the lines refer to the process/stages in the appropriate tables above. For example, point 3 on line A shows

the semantic coding of when the mentor directs the mentee towards future action. And point 3 on line B is where the mentor abstracts the problem and models it for the other mentors.

Figure 1: Semantic coding of mentoring practice in exchanges between senior mentor, mentor and mentee



This mapping shows only a broad impression of how semantic gravity and density vary in these exchanges, and space does not allow close analysis in this working paper. In our ongoing research (Grasmeder and Pountney, forthcoming) we are making a more detailed analysis across a large data set of such exchanges. However, these semantic profiles highlight important differences and shifts in meanings used in both instances. Exchange 1 is closer to practice and context, and the meanings generated are less abstract. The mentors in Exchange 2 start with context (albeit further from context and with more complexity than Exchange 1) and they quickly begin abstraction into a model of mentoring (the curve is steeper and semantic density is stronger).

Note however, that at its most dense and abstract (i.e. the elaboration of the model of mentoring by mentor 3) the language used is metaphorical – e.g. the *stabilisers* (the mentee learning to ride), being a *mayor* (mentee in charge of the classroom), *juggling* (having to multitask). This reliance on metaphor is more than a rhetorical technique: the words chosen stand for, and do not merely replace, conceptual understandings, that are otherwise tacit. What, then, are the specialised concepts, inferences and language that teacher mentors use, and how might this

specialisation of language assist mentoring practice?

Towards a specialised language and knowledge base for teacher mentors

Few would argue that to discuss things well requires a level of language and a conceptual grasp of the subject, and that to exchange ideas on complex ideas such as practice involves giving accounts and receiving and interpreting explanations of practice from others. However, it becomes clear in analysing the accounts of teachers, both in the act of mentoring and in talking and reflecting on their mentoring practice, that the knowledge base for these mentoring practices is unclear. Therefore, I argue that, contrary to what the literature on relational and therapeutic mentoring might suggest, teachers as mentors need more specialised language (and conceptual knowledge) not less. This goes beyond understanding what mentors mean when they talk about practice. It raises the question of what meanings mentors have access to, and how these meanings shape their understandings of their practice. But most importantly, specialised professional knowledge (know that and know how) of and for mentoring enables mentors to imagine how their practice can be different – in other words it is powerful knowledge.

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What is it like to have a mentorship 10,000 miles apart?

Establishing a long-distance mentor/mentee relationship

A think piece by Beatrice Balfour and James Underwood

In this article, we talk about our experiences as mentor and mentee, and how we established a mentorship 10,000 miles apart. In our work, we discovered that contemporary technologies used carefully enabled us to develop and maintain a strong mentorship relationship. Intuitively, one may think that mentorship is something that requires an in person relationship. However, we have found that there are ways to construct a mentorship relationship when living in different continents through contemporary technologies. This mentoring relationship is also a way to conduct reflective research on the nature of leadership and of mentorship. In what follows, we are going to describe how we structured our relationship. We are going to divide this short article in two sections, one section is written from the “Mentee’s Perspective” - that is, Beatrice’s perspective. The second is written from the “Mentor’s Perspective” - that is, James’s perspective. We expect to publish further in coming months on this topic.

I. The Mentee’s Perspective

James and I met as colleagues at the University of Cambridge. We collaborated in a few events and kept in touch as colleagues. In early 2018, I started in a new position as a school Director. This was my first experience in leading a school. Leading a school can be challenging and I felt I needed a mentor outside of my work circle that could give me unbiased advices. James currently works as a Principal Lecturer at the University of Northampton, U.K., in the Faculty of Education and Humanities. Previously, he had been a school leader in the U.K. In September 2018, James and I decided to establish a mentorship relationship. James and I live 10,000 miles away as the school that I run is based in Berkeley, California.

Establishing a mentor/mentee relationship when living 10,000 miles away required us to be ingenious in the use of contemporary technologies. We used three different methods: an online text chat, a work diary, and video calls. These methods also enabled us to gather data for research on the nature of



leadership and mentorship. We will describe each one of these methods and their strengths. It is important to note that for us, these methods are integral and go hand-in-hand.

1. *Online Text Chat:*

For our chat, we use Facebook. This is a place where I ask questions to James that cannot wait until our monthly chat. These questions normally entail dilemmas or issues that come up in the day to day operations of the school and that I am unsure how to address. A large part of my role is to run the day to day operations of the school, and so to ensure that I take the right decisions in these day to day operations is very important. For example, sometimes I have to hold a meeting where I have to have a difficult conversation with a staff member. If I am unsure of how to have that conversation, I run it through with James on the online chat. The online chat is only for brief and simple questions that need immediate answers. I try to stick to no more than a question a day. James is quick at replying, and provides me with simple, short and clear answers. Overall, this chat makes me feel much more intentional and reflexive about the decisions I take on a day to day basis.

2. *Work Diary:*

Directing a school can bring up a lot of feelings for the Director. Often leaders are expected not to show feelings within the work context, but we still feel and have a lot of responsibilities to carry. The work diary is a place to let these feelings flow, a place where I can express them, and also a place to reflect upon some experiences at length. For example, in the diary, I might talk about the challenges I dealt with when addressing a certain issue in the school and how that made me feel; or I might talk about how inspirational a talk that I attended was and how I feel that it would and should inspire my work and my career. I created a word document that I shared with James. James occasionally reads this diary in the shared document, and comments on it. One of the advantages of this diary is that my big feelings are not carried into the chat and do not take over my everyday activities. However, by writing them in the diary, I still give these feelings a space and a time, which is limited to a few minutes a day (or every other day) when I write my diary. This also helps me to keep the chat short and the discussions on it brief and factual without overwhelming James with writing too much or continuously on the chat.



3. *Monthly Video Calls:*

The chat and diary are useful, but leaders in order to feel empowered also need to build a bigger vision. The monthly calls that James and I have are mainly occasions to construct and discuss that bigger vision. For example, we might talk about where I want to take the school in the next couple of years. Or, we might talk about what my career path is. Or, we might talk about the school staff and what I hope for their professional growth. These are wider, bigger and deeper conversations that are difficult to have on a chat, that require time and a proper back and forth extended dialogue. Therefore, we reserve these conversations for our monthly calls. These conversations are important as they inform and inspire my day to day operations, and the future of the school. Also, they make the mentor/mentee relationship 'real', and not just virtual. In this way, James' professional role involves being more than just a few words in a chat, but a person that I can see and hear. This contributes to strengthening our relationship and therefore our work.

II. The Mentor's Perspective

Our process of long-distance mentoring has been a fascinating professional experience. It has also been a way for both of us to engage in

reflective research on the process of mentoring. First, as Beatrice has written above, the need to find strategies to work at a distance has revealed an interesting combination of different methods of online communication. These are as follows: an experienced mentor providing advice regarding specific issues (online text chat); a reader to whom to express the stresses and challenges of leadership (online diary); an experienced peer with whom to converse with regarding long term strategies (online video conversation). Interestingly, each method we have devised is suitable for one of these roles, but would not be for the others. Each one of these methods also provide us with a record of written data that can be compared, and that we can use to create research about the nature of leadership.

Second, as a long-distance mentor, my only perception of Beatrice's context (school and community) is her accounts. Our conversations therefore exist within the paradigm of her subjective perception. We found this to be extremely positive and it led rapidly to building a rapport whereby conversations were deep and open very quickly. The pressure on leaders to work with multiple viewpoints is intense. Similarly, sensitivity to differing perceptions is a vital leadership skill. However, it is important



as a leader to be able to have conversations that are rich, critical and exploratory in order to make thoughtful decisions and to build a long term vision. There are many colleagues, locally based, that a school leader has, who will provide balance through multiple viewpoints. Having one mentor, however, who is focused solely on your perception, is an important addition that can help a school leader to be reflexive and to build resilience.

Distance for us is far from being an obstacle, instead through a careful use of modern technology, it has enabled us to establish a positive and strong relationship. A next stage in our mentor/mentee relationship will be using our understanding of long-distance mentoring to inform mentoring in a local context too.



To what extent can having an experienced teacher as a mentor help student teachers become professional teachers?

An abridged essay by Lauren Marie Richardson

As a recent graduate of teacher education, it is possible to reflect on how some mentors have made a positive impact on my future development as a professional teacher. This reflection has been enhanced through undertaking a coaching and mentoring module in my current M.Ed. This working paper is based on my module assignment. This short paper aims to critically discuss the impact of a mentor on a student studying to become a teacher and touches upon the influence that the act of mentoring has on the mentor. Mentoring has no single definition or model as it can take place in different contexts, however, Clutterback (1991) and Parsloe and Wray (2000) define the term mentoring as; a more experienced individual willing to share their knowledge with someone who is less experienced within the same field (Clutterback, 1991) thus having significant impact on a person's early career (Parsloe and Wray, 2000). There are 506, 400 full time teachers across the UK, each one of those have been at one point, student teachers (British Educational Suppliers Association, 2017). Over twenty years ago

government recognised the issue of trainee teachers needing a mentor whilst training, Fish (1995) claims this provides reasoning as to why government introduced a new act in the late nineties, stating that experienced teachers working alongside student teachers within schools will now be considered their mentors (Fish, 1995).

Over two decades ago, Russell (1993) claimed that learning through experience was viewed in most situations to be one of the most effective ways of learning, therefore, students who learn to become teachers often find it increasingly beneficial to learn through experience within schools, creating the need for a mentor (Russell 1993). Students often misunderstand their mentors' role, they consider experienced teachers who they liaise with in schools to have a wide range of knowledge that will help them learn to teach. However, Fish (1995) draws attention to the fact that the mentor is not an expert knower and student learners already have much knowledge and skills, they simply need to be



encouraged to use them and make their own mistakes as opposed to becoming overly reliant on their mentor (Fish, 1995). Though, as Parsloe and Wray correctly point out students can feel nervous and awkward in new situations, particularly whilst working with more experienced staff (Parsloe and Wray 2000). It can often be a struggle for a student with little experience to direct experienced teachers and support staff, particularly when the student is of a young age, this has been thought to impact their confidence and their overall teaching standard. To overcome this, mentors need the skills, abilities and capacity to inspire students to take responsibility and encourage more experienced staff members to acknowledge the student's capabilities, allowing them to learn through practice and to construct their own knowledge for themselves. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the challenge this creates for the mentor/class teacher as it means that they must now give up authority and hand it to the student. Many mentors find this extremely difficult, particularly due to the amount of pressures teachers have regarding children's attainment, teachers can't exactly afford to let students take over their class in order to learn how to teach for a prolonged period of time.

A student may be negatively impacted as they may not gain enough experience within the classroom. Not only does teacher training place physical and mental demands on the student teacher, but also on schools as a whole and it cannot be denied that having a student teacher within the school affects its organisation and daily working conditions of staff. Palmer (2018) claims that one of the benefits has been found to be that most experienced teachers see mentoring a student teacher as a form of their own continuous professional development (CPD) meaning that they can reflect and learn on their own practice (Palmer, 2018). Additionally, these benefits extend to the student teacher, for example empowering them to communicate with others and make decisions. Learning through experience has been found to produce broadly educated professional teachers whose learning has equipped them to operate in different conditions. Despite this, Parsloe and Leedham (2009) state that training which emphasises on the practical and focuses on the individual context and specific expertise, such as teaching faces issues regarding its educational value, generalisability, relevance and significance. It is argued that student teachers have specific experiences whilst they were training and cannot possibly be fully equipped, capable



teachers once they graduate (Parsloe and Leedham, 2009).

In order to build a student teacher's confidence, to ensure they are on the correct guidelines and to evaluate if they are a capable teacher, mentors are required to observe them. Fish (1995) states that in order to help student teachers learn about and refine their own teaching, observation is the most useful approach (Fish, 1995). A usual teacher training programme asks for students to be observed at least once a week across a wide range of the curriculum, so that the student can have the opportunity to teach a wide range of subjects and to improve on their targets. However, many aspects of observation can be viewed as problematic, Fish (1995) maintains that a purely objective and factual observation is nearly impossible to achieve, insinuating that, the mentor will subconsciously pass judgement on the student that they are observing. In such a human and variable activity that is teaching there are likely to be many possible interpretations of most events leading to the possibility of biased feedback. Fish (1995) further discusses that the best the mentor can do is seek several different perspectives on the event and a range of possible interpretations in order to ensure that they

are not being biased towards the student (Fish 1995). Parsloe and Leedham (2009) further this point by articulating that mentors should always guard against their own prejudices and avoid stereotyping students in order to provide them with a fair and just learning experience (Parsloe and Leedham, 2009). Furthermore, Parsloe and Leedham (2009) also claim the timing of observation feedback is crucial, mentors who delay their feedback or give it to the students in small amounts leave the student feeling anxious and unsure of their next steps. Most students will always have targets to work upon, because they are still learning – it is a mentor's role to not mention every single fault the student made but mention the essentials that should be concentrated on and what steps the student can do to improve. Although it is important to critique the student, negative messages need to be balanced with their strengths too, particularly when providing the student with feedback (Parsloe and Leedham, 2009). Conversely, observation and providing them feedback allows students access to guidance and one to one support, something which is simply impossible for them to have within a university setting.



Though, it is important to mention that much research into this topic was conducted over two decades ago, as recent studies such as Palmer (2018) suggest, the issue of mentoring student teachers is just as prominent now, as it was before I even considered a career in teaching. Recently emerging out of a teacher training programme, I believe that if the correct training is provided and accurate

policies are followed, having an experienced teacher as a mentor helps student teachers on their journey to becoming professional teachers. It seems that the Department for Education in England agree as enhanced mentoring of early career teachers (not just student teachers) is now proposed as a key strategy of their Early Career Framework.

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Be strategic, Be selective

A think piece working paper based on the reading of Clarity by Lyn Sharratt by Andrea Stringer

The school holidays afford educators time to relax and unwind, and while many utilise this time to read for pleasure, many read to develop professionally both in their subject area and/or in the copious areas of education. After purchasing a copy of Lyn Sharratt's book, I was excited to dive right in. But upon reading the first chapter, there was an intensity that required time to absorb the information, reflect upon previous experiences, and relate the concept to the current context. I decided I wasn't in the right headspace to read 'Clarity'. Wanting to be more receptive to the evidence and information provided by Sharratt, I settled in the following week and immersed myself into every chapter.

I would recommend that you read this book over a time period that provides the opportunity to read and reflect on your contextual practice. My learning is deepened when I reflect with others through rich conversation. As an alternative, I highlighted, annotated and scribbled on post-it notes throughout this practical guide. The resources via QR code were informative and yet at times, I was hoping to view a video vignette to provide more insight. This could provide additional learning from those who have unpacked the 14 parameters by sharing their mistakes, challenges, successes and learning. It is not my intention to share all 14

Parameters but to highlight Parameters 1, 2, 4 and 14 as they connect with my role as director of professional practice and my professional experience as a coach.

Figure 1.2 The 14 Parameters of System and School Improvement

1. Shared beliefs and understandings
 - a. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and the right support.
 - b. All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance.
 - c. High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
 - d. All leaders, teachers, and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach, and learn the way they do. (Adapted from Hill & Crivola, 1999)
2. Embedded Knowledgeable Others
3. Quality assessment informs instruction
4. Principal as lead learner
5. Early and ongoing intervention
6. Case management approach
7. Focused Professional Learning at staff meetings
8. In-school meetings—collaborative assessment of student work
9. Book rooms of leveled books and multi-modal resources
10. Allocation of system and school budgets for learning
11. Collaborative inquiry—a whole-system approach
12. Parental and community involvement
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections
14. Shared responsibility and accountability
 - a. We all own all the FACES!

According to Sharratt, *without shared beliefs and understandings (#1)*, it is impossible to lead a team without establishing a shared vision of common beliefs and understandings. I wonder how many school community members, which includes students, parents and support staff, share the school's shared beliefs and do the teaching staff authentically own it? To be transparent and provide



consistency, revisiting the vision often is imperative if we want *shared responsibility and accountability* (#14). Sharratt determines the 4 shared beliefs and understandings as:

- All students can achieve high standards given the right time and right support.
- All teachers can teach to high standards given time and the right assistance.
- High expectations and early and ongoing intervention are essential.
- All leaders, teachers and students can articulate what they do and why they lead, teach and learn the way they do (adapted from Hill & Crevola, 1999).

The two parameters, *shared beliefs and understandings*, and *shared responsibility and accountability* bookend the process. To provide the right assistance to teach to high standards, a 'Knowledgeable Other' is required, which is parameter #2. When I reviewed previous articles about the 14 parameters, I noticed that Parameter #2 Knowledgeable Others has evolved from 'Embedded literacy/instructional coaches' to 'Knowledgeable Others'. I've been wondering why this could have changed or evolved. Initially I thought Sharratt's research may have focused on literacy, but why remove instructional coach? As Dr Rachel Lofthouse indicated in her [recent podcast](#), there are many versions of coaching, such as cognitive, growth, and instructional. Previously pinpointing only instructional coaches could be quite restrictive and limiting. It begs the question of how instructional coaches are determined and what are the desired

qualities. Limiting it to instructional coaches may pigeonhole this critical role.

Globally the word 'coach' has a plethora of meanings and some even view coaching as a synonym for performance management. Issues occur when leaders exploit the coaching process as performance management, which can create a sense of division. While some believe coaches need to be the 'expert', I view the term 'expert' as quite subjective and promotes an imbalance of power. Whereas, expertise can elicit a partnership approach. All-encompassing and inclusive, Sharratt's 'Knowledgeable Others' allows for expertise in various areas for various purposes. The expertise of colleagues is an untapped resource, however, at times, it may be vital to enlist external expertise. The title, 'Knowledgeable Others' broadens the opportunities for more resourceful and experienced educators (internally and externally) to support the professional learning of others.

When I viewed the fourth parameter, Principal as Lead Learner, I questioned if it is too much to expect the principal to also be 'the instructional leader'. Education is complex and schools are contextual, and the principal's role description would reflect that context. What works for one school may not work for another. There is [disturbing evidence](#) about the occupational risks and poor psychological health and wellbeing of school principals across Australia. [According to the 2017 survey results](#) from the Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey, one in five school



principals is overwhelmed by workplace stress and almost half of respondents had faced threats of violence at work. Appallingly, one in three had experienced actual violence.

Knowing few educators who aspire to be principals, I question if being master of so many areas is reasonable? According to the [Australian Professional Standards for Principals](#), principals require knowledge and experience in various areas, such as curriculum, instruction, assessment, data, student wellbeing, teacher wellbeing, legal obligations, policies & procedures, technology, community relations, and effective and ethical governance structures. Can one person have expertise in all these areas? I'm not saying it isn't possible but providing better support for those who are principals and aspiring principals appears to be lacking. By distributing the leadership, principals could enhance and expand the skillset of the leadership team. While we speak of the increasing workloads of teachers, it appears that expectations of principals have increased too. It could be suggested that the 'instructional leader' will become another's role in most schools in the future, as the level of accountability and expertise increases.

To guide instructional leaders or lead learners, Sharratt provides effective wonderings that introduce the *what* and the *how* at the beginning of each chapter. These could be developed to stimulate conversation with colleagues. At the conclusion of each chapter, the commitments deliver direction, and these ideas need time to marinate. Providing advice for those overwhelmed by the 14 parameters, Sharratt states that It is essential to use data to consider areas of immediate need and develop an action plan with benchmarks and timelines. It could be argued that schools should first complete an audit to identify what and how data is being used and more importantly why. After reading this book, school leaders or teachers may decide they want to implement something ... anything as soon as possible. But I would ask for caution. How many times do teachers complain about new initiatives at the start of the year? Leaders and teachers need to be strategic and selective and as Sharratt suggests start with your data. This data and your context will determine where to from there, but to provide balance, I question, 'What will be taken away if something new is added?' Always ask the question 'why' to determine the purpose and that will bring Clarity to all.

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Book Review of Woodley, H. and Morrison McGill, R. (2018) *Toxic Schools*, John Catt Educational

By Sam Collins

The field of books dealing with teacher wellbeing is one that is growing rapidly and with good reason; the current crisis in teacher recruitment and retention has pulled into sharp focus the need to simply treat school staff better. We are at a point where a perfect storm of factors has led to acute difficulties in both enticing new entrants into the profession and retaining experienced staff. The latest DfE (2018) 2017 workforce survey figures show that the numbers of teachers leaving and entering the profession are almost equal. This may sound reassuring, but the secondary school population is forecast to rise dramatically, leaving schools with a huge staffing problem.

The answer is clearly to hold on to staff once they qualify, but the numbers leaving in the first 5 years continue to be shocking, with more than a quarter of teachers (27%) having left the profession before the 3 year mark. The education, and increasingly the mainstream, press seems to carry articles on teacher stress almost daily. With Ofsted just one of the organisations actively researching teacher wellbeing, the penny seems to have finally dropped.

Dr Woodley bases this new book on her extensive PhD research into the use of auto

ethnography in classroom based practitioner research. It is co-authored with Ross Morrison McGill (who contributes insights based on his own experiences to each chapter) and published under the “Teacher Toolkit” brand. The book is painfully honest about the experiences of the staff; Dr Woodley recounts one of her own experiences in some detail, in her background to how the book came about.

Auto ethnography is not a method that many classroom teachers may be familiar with. Perhaps it sounds a bit wishy-washy, a bit pink and fluffy, on first acquaintance. Woodley’s careful explanation, along with the provenance for using this method to shine a light on this issue, shows that it is worthwhile and very revealing. The method employs fictionalised accounts of real events to enable teacher voice to be heard in a safe space, without fear of repercussion for the staff member. (The very real fear of sabotaging your own career by speaking out is undoubtedly a factor in silencing teacher voice). The book acknowledges that in our data driven, tick list culture the importance of the lived experience of staff has been overlooked. When an individual is struggling at work, it feels intensely personal. Dr Woodley’s approach is to take a step back and analyse each of the case studies through the



lens of the eight characteristics of Toxic Schools outlined in chapter 1. This useful model gives structure and rigour to the authentic human experiences which form the main body of the book.

Chapter 11 is an interesting chapter, which examines in some depth the current state of play with regards to teacher voice. There is an analysis of how blogs and social media, which might be assumed to promote teacher voice, are actually stifling it through fear of being exposed as either a trouble maker or a whistle blower. These fears are not unfounded. The

chapter also suggests other routes to teacher voice, such as informal CPD (TeachMeets and the like) and further study.

While the latter chapters contain plenty of advice on coping in (and escaping from) a toxic school the strength of this book primarily lies in its analysis of ways in which a school can be toxic and the devastating effects of that toxicity on staff. It is a welcome and enlightening contribution to the field of teacher wellbeing.

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I can change what I do but it is not until we change what we do that transformation occurs

A think piece working paper by Rebecca Raybould

Introduction

This thinkpiece reflects on the importance of considering school culture during the coaching process.

As part of my work I coach school leaders. When reflecting on my practice I noticed that whilst the coaching was empowering leaders in many ways, there was a recurring theme that planned changes weren't having the desired impact because of the school 'culture': "the way we do things around here" (Bower, 1996).

So, for example, a senior leader might be very keen for middle leaders to take on more responsibility and would use coaching to develop plans to empower the leaders. Even when the leader worked hard to consider the middle leaders' strengths and professional development needs, how expectations of the roles could be clarified and how to secure a balance of support, challenge and accountability sometimes there was still a block to truly empowering the middle leaders.

As a coach having the privilege of working with the leaders at all levels, I noticed that often the 'unspoken' part of the school culture was having more of an influence than the initiative being driven by the senior leader. I began to reflect more on the role of culture in supporting or halting change.

Culture and its importance

Culture can be seen as existing in the "unwritten rules and assumptions, the combination of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, the expectations for change and learning that saturate the school's world" (Peterson and Deal, 2002). So, if the 'unspoken' norms do not align with the empowerment initiative then it is unlikely to be fully realised. For example, when school meeting agendas are dominated by senior leaders and/ or email communications have a very directive tone middle leaders will be much less likely to feel that they really can and should take on



responsibility. As Drucker noted “culture eats your strategy for breakfast” (Cave, 2017).

Of course, I am not arguing that consideration of culture is something new. However, I believe that there is room to increase the emphasis given to consideration of culture in my own coaching.

Paying attention to culture

So far, I have found three ideas particularly valuable in helping me build in greater consideration of school culture during the coaching process:

- Leaders/ coach as anthropological detectives. Peterson and Deal (2002) advise leaders to investigate the current culture through the lens of the anthropologist. In this way colleagues can uncover the current norms and values.
- Teams as cultural creators. Hawkins (2017) argues that individuals have very limited power to transform culture. Teams have the potential to create much greater change by paying attention to the ways in which each member’s daily actions create new norms that reinforce the shared values.
- Pupil needs as the starting and end point. As Cordingley et al (2015) highlight the evidence shows that the most effective professional development has a strong

focus on pupils’ needs and this is of course also highlighted in the National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching (2005). During coaching the consideration of culture is not an end in itself but needs to be considered in the light of changes that leaders want to make to pupil learning.

Possible implications for coaching practice

As I move forwards, I have been experimenting with incorporating these ideas into my practice. Some emerging implications are:

- During contracting start to surface something of the current culture and be explicit that all in the process need to be open to learning and change. So, if a senior leader is commissioning coaching for middle leaders, everyone needs to be comfortable that the current culture will be investigated and that all will need to learn from and support each other in carrying out actions that will help evolve the culture.
- During goal setting retain a strong focus on pupil needs but consider the ways in which school culture needs to develop to support the pupil learning. For example, if using the technique of getting people to articulate a detailed vision of success (Jackson and McKergow, 2007) prompt



them to paint the picture of what they will see in meetings, emails, celebration events, how colleagues talk in the staffroom etc.

- During action planning develop strategies that will help to develop new norms that

support the goals. This will not only involve consideration of the leadership team's actions but also how the 'unwritten rules' of the coach and coaching process align with the goals.

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The potential benefits of peer-coaching models for 'western' teachers in a Chinese ELT context

An abridged essay by Lee Harrison

This paper focuses on English Language Teaching (ELT) in the context of 'westerners', identified as those with British, USA, Canadian, Australian or New Zealand nationality (Stanley, 2013), teaching English in mainland China. It aims to highlight the problem of the poor training provided to such teachers and proposes a potentially beneficial training model based on peer-observation and peer-coaching. It hopes to instigate consideration and discussion fuelled by literature from differing contexts and countries into this very particular, little-studied, topic.

Westerners teaching ESL in China

Studies in English as a Second Language (ESL) in the mainland of China have been on a well-documented rise (Bolton & Gradoll, 2012). This growth goes hand in hand with the need for ESL courses and teachers (Stanley, 2013), inspiring much literature on the topic of English learning in China (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002; Gil, 2008; Pan & Block, 2011; Liu, 2018). Stanley (2013) identifies a problem however, as she demonstrates that demand for 'western' ESL teachers is outstripping supply,

leading institutions to employ many people, who are un-qualified, un-trained and ill-managed. These teachers, regardless for their potentially weak educational and practical backgrounds, are teaching in formal schools, universities and training schools all around China.

Such teachers themselves are not to be blamed for their situation, but the fact that they exist and are potentially not getting the training or support they need from pre-service courses such as CELTA and TEFL (Stanley, 2013), nor from their employers, creates the issue. In this situation, this paper questions if the teachers themselves can be the providers of their own ongoing training, coaching and mentoring.

Peer-coaching in literature

In their research into coaching and mentoring Joyce & Showers (1980) identify effective training must transfer through several 'levels of impact'. These levels consist of 'awareness', 'concepts and organized knowledge', 'principles and skills', and 'application and problems solving' (p.380).



They state that only after training reaches the fourth stage could learners' behaviours be effectively altered. The training components which are suggested to reach such levels of impact, comprise of 'theory presentation', 'modelling', 'practice', 'feedback', and 'coaching for application' (in-class assistance), with stress placed on the final three components (p.384). Joyce & Showers conclude by questioning whether peer-coaching could be used a tool to deliver the final 3 components (pp.384-385). Showers & Joyce (1996) later report that "teachers who had a coaching relationship... practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts" (p.14), leading them to more assertively "recommend that schools organize teachers into peer coaching teams" (p.15).

This author argues that there is potential for a peer-coaching model to provide for the final 3 training components in the context of 'westerns' teaching English in China, however it will first explore another tool which will be later used as part of a synthesis of models.

Peer observation of teachers

Peer-coaching, as explained by Devine, Meyers & Houssemand (2013), is "characterized by equal relationship(s) involving modelling, observation, feedback,

reflective dialogue, and classroom practice" (p.1384). This definition shares much with the above training components proposed by Joyce & Showers (1980). One element of this definition is the idea of 'peer-observation of teachers', or PoT (Cosh, 1999; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004).

The idea that PoTs should aim to be a two-way mutually beneficial leaning experience is made clear in papers such as Race *et al.* (2009). The idea behind a two-way model, where both the observer and observee learn from each other, has been one which has been studied in various countries throughout the world to test its efficacy (Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007; Nguyen & Nga, 2018; Lofthouse, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

Vacilotto & Cummings (2007) and Nguyen & Nga (2018) explore PoT as a two-way model of learning, in the context of pre-service ESL student-teachers. In both studies, participants were to work together to produce lesson-plans, then were tasked to observe each other's lessons, and finally to participate in a two-way feedback session. Vacilotto & Cummings (2007) highlighted how student-teachers had a reduced "fear of being evaluated" (p.153) and supported the idea that PoT models can "engage teachers in self-directed and self-evaluated professional development" (p.160). Nguyen & Nga (2018) in turn reported that a similar model helped



student-teachers reflect on their own learning and teaching issues, and that the environment it created encouraged the dissemination of newly learnt and tested methodologies and ideas (p.194). These findings share similarities with studies conducted in formal schools in the UK, as Lofthouse (2018b) reports that “teachers stated that they were “not frightened to make mistakes” (and) are willingly “more experimental” (p.7).

The dangers of feedback

While the findings of Nguyen & Nga (2018) and Lofthouse (2018b) show that verbal feedback may indeed provide a positive experience for learners, warnings over the use of peer feedback have been voiced by Cosh (1999), as he notes the “very real danger that when feedback is given by those with no training” (p.24). These warnings should not be ignored as they highlight possible ethical implications if using a peer-coaching or PoT models which include verbal feedback. However, it may be argued that it is not the feedback itself that is the risk, but the environment in which this feedback is given may affect the result (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004; Lofthouse, 2018c). This is something that shall be further discussed below.

Comment on pre-service training

The CELTA qualification is identified by Stanley (2013) as one of the most common qualifications which a ‘western’ teacher in China will possess. They are described as ‘one-size-fits-all’ problematic ‘toolkits’ which do not provide sufficient theoretical nor contextual background (p.194-201). Linking this to Joyce & Showers’ (1980) model, the CELTA qualification can be argued to fulfil the requirement for modelling and practice, as the qualification is taught by instructors and mock-classes are executed by the student-teachers (Cambridge Assessment English, n. dat.), however, the presentational, as well as the crucial feedback and in-class assistance stages are lacking. It is in providing these two stages that post-training peer-coaching models may become beneficial.

A possible synthesis

Stanley (2013) identifies several challenges which face many ESL teachers in China, such as culture (pp.17-19), the ‘othering’ of ‘westerners’ (pp.40-51) the pressure to be ‘fun’ (pp.137-147). If teachers have not been inducted into this context during their pre-service ‘one-size-fits-all’ training, this change in socio-political context may also be damaging to teachers’ identities (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) as well as teaching abilities. However, this shortcoming may be limited if a peer-coaching model is used. Using the example of a CELTA certificate holder starting



their new job, the below illustrates how combining peer-coaching as defined by Devine, Meyers & Houssemand (2013), along with the training components suggested by Joyce & Showers (1980), aided by a two-way PoT model encouraged by Race et al. (2009), may provide a more contextual and comprehensive ELT training experience.

1. **Theory presentation** - Basic language teaching methods are provided by pre-service courses. However, further awareness of contextually effective teaching methods may then be continually observed from peer observations. This achieves the first 'level of impact'.

2. **Modelling**- Pre-service courses provide modelling opportunities. However, how behaviour changes in a new context, for example a Chinese classroom, can be observed by a teacher in a peer-coaching and observing environment, with similarities and differences between 'simulated' and 'real-life' practice being noted. Teachers now have more organized and contextually fitting knowledge, identified as the second 'level of impact'.

3. **Practice**- Decontextualized practice is provided by pre-service course. However, as reported by Vacilotto & Cummings (2007), PoT can lessen anxiety and allow new teachers to implement their teaching

techniques in the new context, without the fear of being poorly evaluated. New teachers are aware of the new situation, and can think and develop their skills effectively, in accordance with the third level of impact.

4. **Feedback**- If utilized within a culture with transparent goals and an agreed upon purpose for PoT (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond 2004), feedback can prove helpful for teachers (Nguyen & Nga, 2018) and can help towards problem-solving and improved application, fulfilling the need of the fourth 'level of impact'.

5. **Coaching for Application**- Hands-on assistance, such as lesson planning, problem sharing and solving, as well as idea dissemination, given by others in the same context is defined as a peer-coaching relationship (Devine, Meyers & Houssemand, 2013, p.1384), which can help with application and problem solving over a longer time-frame (Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007).

The need for a 'culture of learning'

Taking a 'theory X' perception of motivation (McGregor, 2006), it may be argued that teachers may not wish to develop themselves in this context, which was commonly observed by Stanley (2013, pp.201-208). This potential issue may be averted if such teachers are part of a 'culture of learning'



(Gill, 2010). As described in detail by Gilchrist (2017), the building and promoting such a culture will take time and trust but building a 'culture of learning' into a peer-coaching environment may expose new teachers to the expected standards, language, norms and behaviours of the culture, and begin to acclimatize to them naturally. Those who wish for more development can seek it out, while others who may just wish to "do their jobs as well as they can while there are in China" (Stanley, 2013, p.206) can learn contextual and tested methods from their peers, without being 'forced' by an authority to learn something outside of their ability or interest. The danger of poor feedback too may be averted, as previously stated above, the environment in which feedback is given can affect the result (Lofthouse, 2018c), so if environment has transparent goals and an agreed upon purpose for PoT, feedback can be a useful two-way learning opportunity.

Conclusion

This paper does not propose a training solution for all ESL institutions in all contexts. What it has endeavoured to do is highlight the problem of the poor training provided to many new 'western' teachers in China, and to argued the potential efficacy of peer-coaching

in this context. In doing so, it synthesized findings from literature into a possible training model, which includes the training components and levels of impact as recommended by Joyce & Showers (1980), uses peer-observation as a tool and highlights the importance of a 'culture of learning'. It is not a 'one-size-fits-all' model, and it understands that peer-coaching environments cannot be made overnight (Gilchrist, 2017), and that not all institutions may be able to, nor desire to, implement it. However, it hopes to open a dialogue of discussion in which ESL teachers and trainers can identify strengths, weaknesses or gaps in their own training experience and training curriculum. It hopes to empower new ESL teachers to steer away from a 'de-skilling' focus on development through leadership (Gemmil & Oakley, 1992), which participants in Stanley's (2013) ethnography seemed to depend on (pp.201-208), which can result in coaching and mentoring morphing into mere 'performance management' (Lofthouse, 2018a, p.5). Instead it aims to steer teachers towards feeling more comfortable while learning on the job, which is as a valid way to develop (Forsyth, 2008), by exercising their own initiatives and taking more responsibility for their own, and their peers, continued professional development.



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CPD in Schools: Who is it really for?

A Research Working Paper by Lewis Fogarty

Abstract

Existing literature is yet to clearly identify what makes continuous professional development (CPD) effective. Consequently, designing CPD that can effectively meet the developmental needs of all teachers is extremely challenging and more insight is needed. Particularly, teachers' perceptions have not been considered adequately both in government frameworks and previous research focuses, therefore, this study asks teachers how they perceive the CPD they receive and what is important to them. What emerged was a clear lacuna between what teachers' value, and what they receive. With a range of themes identified and explored there are calls to action for school leaders and CPD facilitators in order to develop CPD that is designed with the teachers' professional development at the centre.

Introduction

Developing an delivering effective CPD seems to be elusive feat. Teachers and facilitators have alluded to practices necessary to make

CPD effective, however, no-one has been able to articulate the intricacies of the process. Consequently, researchers are left wondering what actually occurs within effective CPD environments that encourages teachers to learn and grow as professionals? (Patton et al, 2013). It has been made clear that there is no easy solution to the challenging issue of designing effective CPD that can meet the needs of all teachers, (Makopoulou & Armour, 2011), and it is also clear that there is a need for further exploration within this field.

Most notably, there is a distinct lack of studies that have explored teachers' perceptions of CPD in the UK. This ultimate lack of exploration of those subject to CPD, the missing people according to (Gray, 2005), is the motivation for this current study. I want to present teachers' perspective to support a deeper understanding of the challenges in designing effective CPD.

In 1976 it was suggested that effective practices should involve teachers in planning



sessions and need surveys should be conducted to ensure that the new practices or strategies are well aligned with what teachers want, (Joyce et al., 1976). As well as the need to find more creative ways to help teachers translate new knowledge into practice, keeping in mind the problems related to 'working on' rather than 'working with' teachers, (Ward & Tikinoff, 1976). Circular 6/86 (DES, 1986) set out new procedures for the funding and management of what was then referred to as INSET. Prior to this, the emphasis had clearly been on the individual teacher attending courses at Teachers' Centers or occasionally following accredited academic courses to master's level. These political changes were not initiated in the Department of Education and Science as it was then, but in the Department for Trade

and Industry, and were the first of their kind, (Jones, 2011).

What closely followed this emergence was a series of scholars highlighting what makes effective CPD, concerningly, over 40 years since original concerns, similar notions are still being suggested. For example, Nieto (2009) suggests traditional CPD has been fragmented, at best being characterized as both inadequate and irrelevant, and at worst as incompetent resulting in teachers being failed as learners. Furthermore, Cordingley et al, (2015) suggests teacher development is not always adequately focused on the specific needs of pupils, nor is it always sustained and practice-based. It is clear lessons have not been learned and further evidence for this can be seen in table 1.



Table 1 – A brief summary CPD recommendations in the past 30 years

Little (1988)	Abdal-Haqq (1996)	DfE (2016)
<p>1. Ensures collaboration adequate to produce shared understanding, shared investment, thoughtful development, and a fair, rigorous test of selected ideas;</p> <p>2. Requires collective participation in training and implementation;</p> <p>3. Focused on crucial problems, curriculum and instruction;</p> <p>4. Conducted often enough and long enough ensure progressive gains in knowledge, skill, and confidence; and</p> <p>5. Consideration with and contributes to professional habits and norms of collegiality and experimentation.</p>	<p>1. Is ongoing.</p> <p>2. Includes training, practice, and feedback; opportunities for individual reflection and group inquiry into practice; and coaching or other follow-up procedures.</p> <p>3. Is school based and embedded in teacher work.</p> <p>4. Is collaborative, providing opportunities for teachers to interact with peers.</p> <p>5. Focuses on student learning, which should, in part, guide assessment of its effectiveness.</p> <p>6. Encourages and supports school-based and teacher initiatives</p> <p>7. Is rooted in the knowledge base for teaching.</p> <p>8. Incorporates constructivist approaches to teaching and learning.</p> <p>9. Recognizes teachers as professionals and adult learners.</p> <p>10. Provides adequate time and follow-up support.</p> <p>11. Is accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p>1. Should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.</p> <p>2. Should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.</p> <p>3. Should include collaboration and expert challenge.</p> <p>4. Programmes should be sustained over time.</p> <p>5. Must be prioritised by school leadership.</p>

Furthermore, Kennedy (2005) reviewed experimental studies of professional development carried in the US across this time period. She commented that most reviews seek to define a list of critical program design features such as those common across table 1. She goes on to debunk these set of design features that have been presumed to define high-quality

professional development and suggest that program design features may be unreliable predictors of program success. Note that this study took place 11 years before the DfE (2016) framework. Despite the perpetuating harmony of what ostensibly makes CPD effective, many scholars have highlighted the issues with contemporary CPD practice. These issues inform the five themes of questioning



adopted in this study and are outlined in more detail below. These questions all were designed with a broader research question in mind:

Research question:

How aligned are school CPD systems with teachers' desires and is this important to teachers?

Theme 1 – Alignment

Research commissioned by the TTA (now the TDA) (2005) suggests that schools were struggling to find alignment between the competing needs of individual teachers and their schools. Prior to this, Surgrue et al (2001) raised questions around teacher and school needs vs system needs, suggesting that there are systems present that don't support the needs of teachers and schools which should be considered wholly unproductive. Whilst this forms part of the main research question it is also pertinent to explore teachers' perceptions of alignment across the levels of education.

Question 1: How aligned do you feel your schools' CPD focuses are with your personal needs as a teacher?

Theme 2 - Structure and content

Teachers have described feelings of guilt and even professional negligence if they took a day away from the classroom to attend a course that failed to offer anything of use to their pupils, (Gray, 2005). Dymoke and Harrison (2006) echo the call for collaboration and state that an institution's approach to collaborative working exemplifies a positive whole-school ethos for professional development.

Question 2: How does the design of your schools' CPD cycle promote collaboration and a positive learning experience that produces opportunities to develop classroom practice?

Theme 3 - The facilitator

It has been suggested that CPD facilitators have long struggled with how to create learning experiences powerful enough to transform teachers' classroom practice, (Guskey, 1986). They need to respect the role of prior knowledge and the active and social nature of learning, (Patton et al, 2012). Further issues for facilitators include practical concerns about time and resources, building trust and confidence and providing a balance of autonomy and external direction, (Drennon & Cervero, 2002).



Question 3: How well do you feel CPD facilitators take the time to consider your prior knowledge and build rapport with the group?

Theme 4 - What does it mean for school leaders

Cordingley et al (2015) suggest that leaders must distinguish between operational and procedural knowledge, with [L1] professional learning in CPD time. Criticism comes from Pedder and Opder (2010) who found that that CPD in schools in England is, in the main, erratic, poorly planned and poorly evaluated, and not an articulated, coherent strand of schools' coordinated school improvement strategies, pointing the finger squarely at school leaders – is this criticism warranted?

Question 4: How well do you feel school leaders avoid ineffective use of CPD time and ensure a clear focus is always visible?

Theme 5 - Ways forward

Involving teachers in decisions identifying their own learning needs and experiences has been shown to result in increased commitment to CPD's success, (Deglau & O'Sullivan, 2006). Additionally, action research has been identified as a transformative model of CPD in developing

teachers' capacity for transformative practice and professional autonomy, (Kennedy, 2005).

Question 5: To what extent are you encouraged and supported to identify your own learning needs and conduct inquiry?

Method

This research has one data collection phase, a questionnaire containing fourteen questions developed from the literature as laid out here, including several demographic questions. It also has a part B to all questions asking if the particular theme was important to them. All theme related questions were answered on a 10-point likert-scale.

The study was conducted in a comprehensive secondary school that is part of a small academy chain. Earlier this year, the school were rated good by Ofsted moving from being a requiring improvement rated school. Consequently, the teachers have experienced a little more freedom and a bigger role in certain aspects of the schooling. Despite this, these questionnaires, which could have been seen as a way of having more of a voice, were only completed by 17 participants, 30% of the organisation. The results were collected through volunteer sampling and demographic data shows that whilst there were an even spread of males and females, the majority



were in the 31-40 age bracket and have been teaching for 5-10 years. A quarter of respondents had been teaching for more than 10 years. The results are discussed in more detail below and these factors should be kept in mind when doing so.

Results and discussion

Table 2 – Summary of data collected

	Part 1 – School level	Part 2 – Policy level	Difference
Q1 Alignment	5.9	8.3	-2.4
Q2 Structure & content	6.3	8.2	-1.9
Q3 The facilitator	6.2	8.3	-2.1
Q4 School leaders	5.7	9.1	-3.4
Q5 Ways forward	6.1	8.9	-2.8
Average	6.0	8.6	-2.6

Firstly, self-report evaluation has well documented limitations but also can be useful for informing CPD design and if you take the view of those receiving and those giving the CPD it can give a better picture of convergence or not. Also, this is a relatively small-scale research project conducting in one location, at one time, and the reader must keep this in mind. What this data reveals are a clear difference between what teachers perceive as important, and what they are

experience as CPD in their school, and as a result there is a need for further investigation.

Considering previously discussed research there are areas of dissonance as well as harmony. Most notably, Pedder and Opder (2010) suggested there is a lack of strategic planning of CPD provision to balance effectively between individual and organisational learning needs and national policy priorities, my study disagrees with this certainly on an individual level with an average of 8.6/10 agreement with government proposed frameworks, (DfE, 2016). There does seem to be more dissonance on a school level with an average of 6.0/10 average of within school experiences of CPD meeting these recommendations. Kennedy (2015) research may offer some explanation for the lack of positive experience at school level despite government frameworks getting it right.

The structure and content do not appear to sufficiently promote collaboration which does seem to be desired by teachers, the facilitators do not seem to be doing enough to consider prior knowledge and build rapport with groups, school leaders still need to prioritise the way in which CPD time is spent and the recommended ways forward have yet



to been realized at school level. These themes may contribute to issues with what Sugrue et al (2001) summarized as conflict between system needs vs. school and individual needs, resulting in a lack of alignment between school CPD systems and teachers desires and this is clearly important to teachers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers may well have become “missing persons” (Evans, 1999) and this research highlights the gap between what is important to teachers and what they are

experiencing in schools. Perhaps there are wider consequences around teacher recruitment and retention as a result. There is a call to replace our current conception of “good” CPD, with a more nuanced understanding of what teachers do, what motivates them, and how they learn and grow, (Kennedy, 2005). We need to move way beyond simply presenting prescriptions or bodies of knowledge, and expecting them to learn. This would then contribute to a move towards more effective CPD for teachers.

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Developing CPD provision by embedding enquiry/research practices supported by coaching and mentoring techniques

A practice insight paper by Steven Riley

Around ten years ago, discussions regarding teaching becoming a 'Masters Profession' were rife. Therefore, when I was offered a chance to commence a Master's degree at this time, I did not hesitate in accepting my place.

The profession has fallen victim to a number of enforced developments since, but the requirement of a teacher holding a post-graduate qualification beyond QTS never materialised. Nevertheless, I never regretted my decision to undertake my MA in Education, and firmly believe that I am a far better practitioner because of what I learnt whilst undertaking my research.

A few years into my qualification, my role within my school adapted and I began to recruit colleagues onto the same course I was completing, as well as supporting them through the initial stages of their research. The cost of this undertaking was fairly substantial, and although we had financial help at points by certain university grants and

bursaries, it started to emerge that just enabling specific teachers to study at this level might not be a sustainable or sensible use of resources. With shrinking school budgets, money was of course a concern. Our main issue, however, was that research undertakings by our teachers were often small in scale and often very specific to the developmental need(s) of an individual. This raised questions about the 'value' of the system that was being developed for the school as a whole. I began to wonder if it would be more beneficial to devise a system whereby all of our colleagues could begin to engage in research at some level, my hypothesis being that lots of people undertaking small projects would lead to far wider developmental changes than a handful of teachers tackling much larger projects on their own.

Therefore, my own research began to focus on developing and embedding research and enquiry practices of teachers as a means of improving their CPD provision. I initially started by investigating teachers' perceptions



of research and factors that could be a barrier to the implementation of the strategies I went on to devise.

I found that several main areas would need overcoming in order for the experiment to have any chance of success:

Time: Teachers are understandably concerned about workload and additional, sometimes burdensome, professional development activities and the time they have to complete projects in which they are asked to participate. In order to mitigate the issue, we firstly considered where time could be spent on research and enquiry projects. We have since dedicated full ‘training days’ and CPD afternoons to enquiry practices. This was somewhat successful, but we found that unstructured time, in the infancy of the model, was not always considered worthwhile. We have therefore started to adopt new methods linked to coaching, which I will cover later in this paper. It is also worth noting that whilst in discussions with other practitioners from other schools taking a similar approach to CPD, it has been mentioned that sometimes teachers might feel they have *too much* dedicated time, which could be used more beneficially in the classroom, trialling practitioner research. It is clear that time is a major barrier and one that

must be carefully balanced with consideration to individual schools; a one-size-fits-all approach to solving this issue is not appropriate.

Access to resources: An obvious issue for enabling teachers to conduct enquiry and research was not having access to relevant academic papers. This would not have been as easy for us to solve without the support of our university partner, Leeds Beckett University. This institution has allowed all of our 120 teachers to sign up to the university as ‘Associate Staff’ members, giving access to both their online and physical libraries. This has been transformative for us, but as an isolated strategy could prove to be worthless and could have further impact on staff time if no training accompanies the access. With this in mind, we offer staff training on using the libraries and have additional support from university tutors, who help us to identify important papers relevant to our studies, coordinated by myself as the director of research for the school.

Teacher training/support needs: In addition to being shown how to use the online library resources, we also offer training in ‘best research practices’, often supported once again by colleagues from Leeds Beckett



University. One huge potential barrier to using research to inform teaching practice is teachers not understanding or misinterpreting their findings. To help reduce this potential issue, we have elected 'research leads' within the school who can offer direct support and guidance when it is required. Support sessions are held, as well as the school running additional CPD workshops, where collaboration between staff is heavily encouraged as a means of teachers helping and supporting each other. This is also a good way for practice to be shared, widening the value of the model.

I also found that the word 'research' sometimes had undesirable connotations, due to being historically and inappropriately associated to certain "off-the-shelf" strategies with which practitioners may have engaged. It was also a common misconception that any research practice would be a lengthy process requiring additional and potentially onerous paperwork.

It was clear to me that the model I had devised was not necessarily 'research' based, but instead offered opportunities for teachers to 'enquire' about a particular project that was important to them in order for them to trial new practices that were based on

tangible evidence. The word 'enquiry' was therefore adopted in place of the word 'research', although it is worth pointing out that we do still offer options for our staff to conduct *actual* research, alongside our university partner.

The model itself is based around a structure of support, in which enquiry themes/topics are the foci for school improvement. The five areas that we use are designed to encompass an extremely wide range of projects. Each theme has sub-categories that can change annually with the changing demands of the school and which are identified in each year's School Improvement Plan.

The theme areas are:

- Leadership and Management
- Teaching and Learning
- Data and Assessment
- Personal Development and Wellbeing (student and staff)
- Behaviour and Welfare (recently re-branded as Character and Culture)

If there is anything that seems to fit outside of these themes, staff may elect to undertake research within an area of their own devising, providing this is likely to have beneficial outcomes for the school. This adaptation and



flexibility suits the model well, as it is used as a tool for teachers at all levels to identify issues and suggest possible solutions that can eventually be disseminated and deployed where necessary and when relevant.

We also give the opportunity for teachers to work with academic staff from Leeds Beckett University, by offering tutor-supported modules from the Carnegie School of Education's five centres:

- Coaching and Mentoring: CollectivED
- LGBTQ & Inclusion: Inclusion in Education Centre
- Race & Education: Centre of Race, Education and Decoloniality
- Mental Health and Wellbeing: Centre of Excellence in Mental Health in Schools
- Creativity: Storymakers Company

The work conducted in collaboration with these centres may lead to further study for staff who wish to take their research beyond basic enquiry, including staff having the opportunity to be inducted onto a Master's-level qualification (and beyond). The five centres can also act as an outlet for teachers' findings to be published as working papers. In addition, my school will also launch a working-paper series, with the support of our

university partner, publishing the results of our copious research ventures.

In our initial version of the model, the time we made available for research activities was not always well-utilised and some teachers lacked the confidence in research practices. Others found that much of the allocated 'enquiry time' was being spent finding appropriate resources, which was not considered a good use of precious time. I referred earlier to a support measure whereby some relevant academic papers are sourced on our behalf, in order to streamline the model and allow staff to focus their time and efforts on developing their practice. We now have a growing bespoke library of resources (online and physical) that our staff can utilise, but it was clear that further support would be required in order to help ensure the success of our model.

It was at this point that I started to consider the potential benefits of employing strategies offered through coaching and mentoring. I wish to be clear that it has never been my intention to develop or employ coaches within school, but instead encourage all staff to utilise coaching techniques to help them to



understand and develop their personal research activities.

When I started my research into coaching, I came across various approaches, outlined in research published by Jim Knight (2017). '*Directive*' coaching focuses on developing strategies, and relies heavily upon the coach sharing their expertise. '*Dialogical*' coaching includes more of an input from the 'coachee', but experiences and expertise are still shared from the coach.

In both of these methods, there is a requirement for the 'coach' to have some knowledge and understanding of a topic area. Neither suited our model particularly well, as the experts in the subject matter were more likely to be the teachers who have conducted the research and are then being 'coached'. A third method, known as '*Facilitative*' coaching, seemed to be far more applicable. In this model, there is no requirement of the coach having any knowledge of the subject matter being discussed, just a basic understanding of the structure of a professional conversation and an ability to ask relevant developmental questions. The risk of the coaching conversation drifting towards becoming more dialogical in nature is reduced

as there is less chance of the coach having expertise or experiences in the subject being discussed, although this is not always the case. Regardless, the coach is encouraged to 'stay in role' in order to enable the facilitative style. The result should lead to a deeper understanding of a subject from the 'coachee' and a sharing of their practice, whereby the coach may learn something.

Following a development session with Rachel Lofthouse from CollectivED we have combined this facilitative style with a coaching technique which involves three participants, who make up a 'listening triad'. In this model, members of staff from the same themed enquiry area first get together into a group led by the associated research leader for that theme. Participants then move into smaller groups of three. Within this triad, each contributor in turn experiences one of three roles, outlined below, in order for a professional conversation to occur. About five minutes per conversation is allocated, followed by a further minute to review. If time allows, groups could then identify key themes and issues emerging to feed back to a bigger group from the same enquiry theme. The three roles are:

- The 'Questioner': who asks questions which prompt the 'respondent' to discuss



their ideas, progress and concerns about their research/enquiry

- The 'Respondent': who explains their responses to the questions posed by the questioner
- The 'Listener': who records key ideas which emerge and gives a brief verbal review at the end of the dialogue and passes their notes to the respondent for further review.

The process is repeated so that every member of the triad has engaged as each role. At the end of the process, each 'respondent' is encouraged to reflect on the conversation they have had and link it to the next steps of their research strategy or use it as an opportunity for reflection to help them to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of their chosen subject area.

As well as there being no requirement of the coaches having specific expertise and experiences in topic areas, there is also no obligation for triads to remain the same in future CPD sessions of a similar set up. This is helpful not only with regards to the organisation of events, but also with sharing findings more widely between staff and encouraging more diversity of collaboration within the school.

Another area of my research on coaching helped me to identify and establish good working practices as part of the 'facilitative listening triads' model. The Theory of 'Practice Architecture' by Stephen Kemmis (2014) has suggested that in order for the professional conversations to be most useful, several considerations or 'spaces' must be observed.

The Physical/Temporal Space: The 'Doings'.

This is *what* activities occur and the nature of the surroundings and activities where the conversations are taking place. In this case, this is the set-up of the triads within the themed area, supported by the research leaders. We have also been careful to give *actual* physical space for the process – allowing triads to 'break out' into separate areas in order to have private conversations in an environment where the contributors can concentrate. This relates to:

The Social 'Space': The 'Relatings' and 'Relationships'. This is how individuals relate and connect with each other and how individuals feel in a social space. For this model, we ensure that groupings are chosen by the participants themselves and that specific guidelines are established and adhered to, in order to encourage trust at all levels – particularly from leaders within the school. It is vital that there can be no fear of



the content of the conversations being used as a means of employing accountability measures, etc.

The Semantic 'Space': The 'Sayings'. This is what is said and written, the vital communication aspect of coaching and the nature of how this is utilised. Under the circumstances of the listening triads, this is not only the conversations that occur, but also what is written down by each participant and also the language that is used within the wider space, particularly from the leaders.

Although I have made a reference to accountability measures not being enforced within the conversations of CPD sessions, it has been recognised that this is an important factor of the overall model and it has not been overlooked. We have included teachers having a research target as part of our performance management procedures. This, however, was very carefully considered and we made the decision not to assess the findings of research projects, but instead we simply require evidence of engagement. Quality control measures have been implemented in the form of small termly reports, which help teachers to steer their research and can double as a request for assistance. This also allows senior leaders to see the impact of certain undertakings, some

of which can then be adapted and adopted at a wider level where and when appropriate.

It is also a significant factor of the model that there is no expectation for a project to be completed within a school year. For many of our staff, this additional constraint would potentially limit the progress and impact of the undertaking(s) and put an unrealistic expectation on there being tangible outcomes for all staff in the month of July. This would be detrimental to what we want to achieve, and so for us, research projects start and end when appropriate. When well monitored and supported, this flexibility allows for a greater level of engagement and ownership of the research and means that CPD activities are on-going and always relevant to the current needs of the practitioner and the school. This said, we do hold events for staff to share practice when a number of projects have reached an appropriate stage. Various approaches have been used to do this, including a market-place style event and through offering workshops that staff can elect to attend. In theming the research conducted by our staff, it helps to ensure that work that is shared will be of relevance to a vast number of colleagues. Also, by holding these events in September, we have found



that the message of 'continuing' research is being reinforced.

Our model is still adapting, and I foresee that this will continue, and rightly so, as the needs of our school and staff continue to change. What we have found is that a new culture is emerging, and that more and more practice is being informed by evidence and research. As

the model continues to grow, we will be developing greater expertise and further opportunities for collaboration, which is a proven strategy in helping teachers to improve their practice. Moreover, this development will be occurring in an environment where teachers feel better supported and where professional conversations are actively encouraged as an instrumental foundation of CPD.

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Three Questions For School Leaders

A practice insight paper by Max Bullough, Leah Crawford Carolyn Hughan.

“Wouldn’t it be great if we could understand our schools better from the inside?”

“Can you ever imagine a time when we look further than the data record to see the full picture of how a school is performing?”

“Could we possibly conceive of a self-evaluation that did not pick and choose the stories it told about a place, a method that did not leave unlocked the myriad of legitimate narratives held in the collective compendium of the school’s population, a process that could capture why a school was going well in some parts and not in others?”

THIS IS NOT A FAIRY STORY BUT....

Well, once upon a time, three people did. In the dawn-time they were eager English teachers. They worked hard, cared for their students and their colleagues and over time were grateful to receive promotions and, what’s more, they never stopped exploring stories.

In leadership positions, they were asked to make judgements of their colleagues and of teachers and leaders in other schools. Quality assurance is important, they thought. There’s no harm in that.

But they began to feel increasingly uncomfortable. Because they never stopped loving stories, they would hear and see stories in a school that were being ignored. Trying to capture why a school was working or not working shouldn’t be the job of an outsider. Surely the school held many stories within it. If those stories could be told and heard and pondered, wasn’t that the way for the school to know itself better and become better?

THUS IT WAS THAT “LEADERSHIP THROUGH NARRATIVE” WAS BORN.

The power of knowing and telling your story has been recognised in industry for decades. The marketing world has always known it. It was how Stephen Denning transformed knowledge sharing in the World Bank. Kendall Haven and Tony Sinanis have written on the



power of story for school leadership and learning. Baroness Susan Greenfield's latest book, 'Mind Change' proposes that the ability to shape and to make sense of story can help to maintain our human capacity to reason with empathy in this technological age. School review – that involves deep self-evaluation, not just external judgement – is notoriously difficult. The **Leadership through Narrative** approach to school review supports schools to know and tell their own story, for two main reasons:

Firstly, where leaders are able to articulate a deep and complex story, we believe there is more coherence, clarity, alignment of values and expectations, for the simple reason that story is the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful.

Secondly, when members of a school community are asked to share their stories, it heightens their awareness of their histories, their values and their investment in their schools.

HOW IS IT ORGANISED?

What is, then, a Leadership through Narrative Review?

Each review is a situated case study, informed by the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. The core evaluative aim is for the school to better understand itself and become better placed to plan for improvement with an increased sense of agency. This relies on a climate of openness, trust and empowerment, all of which are built in to our approach to school leaders and in to our methodology.

Data is gathered using a series of semi-structured narrative interviews. The richness of qualitative data arising from the interviews can give rise to dominant threads, themes and characters, defining moments, unhelpful diversions and emergent myths. We ask the leadership team to engage with these story fragments with courage and interest in order to create a more generative future for the school. At each school the Headteachers have selected or invited the members of staff to be interviewed and over a two day period the storytelling takes place. In the afternoon of the second day, a Nominal Group Technique is used to maintain the school's ownership of the data. The processing, theming, interpretation and prioritisation of outcomes are all owned by the school: facilitated by the reviewers.



Every graduate team of the **Leadership through Narrative** experience is gifted a working title for their school's narrative and decides on two fundamental sets of priorities, one the list of things to celebrate more, and the other the list of areas for further action. Some have called this the school's new improvement plan.

THE STORY SO FAR

In our first two years, we have worked with eleven schools, six primaries and five secondaries.

In the secondaries an average of 45 staff and 10 pupils have been interviewed and in the primaries an average of 27 staff and 13 pupils. Our team consists of three interviewers, all have been English teachers, two of whom have been headteachers and one has been a

Local Authority English Adviser. The evidence so far is showing a richness of information about the culture of the organisations and the energy unleashed by storytelling, which school leaders can harness for improvement.

CONCLUSION

*It is great to understand our schools better from the inside. We have imagined a time when we looked further than the data record to see the full picture of how a school is performing. We have conceived of a self-evaluation that does not pick and choose the stories it tells about a place. **Leadership through Narrative** is a method that does not leave unlocked the myriad of legitimate narratives held in the collective compendium of the school's population; it is a process that can capture why a school is doing well in some parts and not in others.*

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IPDA conference 2018 – Border Crossings: Professional learning in the 21st century

A conference review working paper by Diana Tremayne

IPDA (the International Professional Development Association <http://ipda.org.uk/>) has over 200 members and one of its key aims is to 'support and promote professional development and learning of education practitioners and across practitioner contexts'. Its main journal is '[Professional Development in Education](#)' and it has recently also launched '[Practice: Contemporary Issues in Practitioner Education](#)'.

IPDA is a relatively small organisation compared to others in educational research so it is perhaps unsurprising that I had heard lots about what a friendly and supportive conference it is to attend. I was interested as the theme of 'border crossings' resonated with my PhD research into informal online teacher-learning communities and was pleased to have a proposal accepted for a roundtable discussion. As with all conferences there are difficult choices to be made when selecting workshops but a flavour of some of those I attended is given here, alongside some thoughts about the first keynote from Professor David Guile.

David Guile's keynote: '**Expertise and identity in inter-professional work: conceptual and practical challenge**' was a fascinating start to the conference, asking questions about why interprofessional working and learning are still seen as the exception rather than the norm in spite of the emergence of social theories of learning over a long period of time. He spoke of the perpetuation of binary distinctions in terms of professional and interprofessional formation, such as initial and continuing development or theory and practice and offered the concept of recontextualization to overcome this. This built on the conference theme of border crossing contexts to consider different and new forms of knowing. The chance to discuss the topic in groups and share questions via Padlet gave valuable time to consider the topic in more depth.

Bally Kaur's ([@BallyKaur3](#)) session '**Beyond the qualification: spaces for informal professional learning**' interested me partly because it considers informal spaces for learning but also because of its focus on the adult education sector, which chimed with my



own teaching experience in further education. It was fascinating to see how others engaged with the topic and highlighted the fact that informal learning is so hard to capture due to its tendency to be 'largely invisible' (Eraut, 2004, p. 249).

Both Bally's session and my own (**Informal online learning communities as sites for professional learning and agency**) made reference to **Linda Evans'** recent (2018) call for further research into informal learning so I was keen to attend her session entitled '**Crossing border and extending spaces. Discussing the nature and basis of professional development in semi-social environments'**. The semi-social environments considered related to informal discussions amongst Oxbridge lecturers in pubs, which were sometimes continuations of more formal meetings. She raised questions around how the conviviality of the setting and the opportunity to focus on more than 'day-to-day' issues might contribute to informal learning. Although this is a setting far removed from my own research into teachers' use of Twitter for informal professional learning, it certainly seems possible to draw parallels with the role that a more relaxed setting can play in supporting opportunities for learning.

As well as meeting new people, one of the most enjoyable aspects of conferences is the opportunity to make connections with people who you have previously only 'met' via Twitter or other social media outlets. This was the case with **Suzanne Culshaw** ([@SuzanneCulshaw](https://twitter.com/SuzanneCulshaw)). We had followed each other online for a while so I was aware of her research on struggling teachers and keen to find out more about her methodology. The session: '**Intermingling the spoken with the visual: a methodological review of collage'** was a fascinating one, with Suzanne sharing some incredibly powerful visual representations of how teachers understood their experiences and discussion of how this linked to the themes from the interviews.

Although this is just a taste of a few of the conference sessions, hopefully it conveys a range of the topics covered: for a small conference there was certainly plenty to listen to and to provoke discussion and thought at both the more formal parts of the programme and the more relaxed ones. I was led to expect a friendly conference and was certainly not disappointed. As conference attendance also gives membership for the year I hope to stay involved and am pleased that this spring IPDA are launching #IPDAconversations via Twitter and their blog to encourage debate



and discussion before the 2019 conference.

You can also follow IPDA on Twitter via

[@ipda_prof_learn](https://twitter.com/ipda_prof_learn)

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How does emotional intelligence support the teacher in the classroom?

A think piece working paper by Ruth Whiteside

I am increasingly fascinated by the role of emotional intelligence when used deliberately as a tool to support the teacher in an increasingly busy classroom. Emotional intelligence in the context of this think-piece is not simply being intelligent with feelings, but also about how we, as learners, teachers, citizens, make sense of the world around us. Mary-Helen Immordino-Yang said in an interview with the New York Times ¹ that: “It is literally neurobiologically impossible to think deeply about things that you don’t care about.”

It is important to note here that this is not just the ‘E’ in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). We can now see in real-time what happens in the brain when learning takes place: “When students are emotionally engaged, we see activations all around the cortex, in regions involved in cognition, memory and meaning-making...” ²

Of course, this can apply to teachers as well, not just the pupils!

I believe we should be making emotional connections between concepts if we are to engage pupils in their learning, teachers in their role and schools in their communities. The constructs to achieving this are for another time, but I would argue that rethinking assessment, developing the curriculum from the ground up, and recognising the importance of the learning environment are key to helping us make those emotional connections.

For now, I want to look at how a teacher can use – intentionally – emotional intelligence (EQ) as a tool to support their practice. Coaching and mentoring are vital processes to support teachers at points of career transition, when implementing new initiatives, during periods of change, for instance – and most teachers welcome the

¹ New York Times 04.05.2016 article by Jessica Lahey

² ibid



thought of peer support and collaboration. There is, however (and this is well-reported) a rapidly growing awareness of the importance and necessity of good mental health and well-being, without which we can neither learn nor teach effectively. When we feel unsafe and insecure, we are less likely to be able to use our cognitive function effectively. If we perceive we are under threat, we get ready to fight or run – and our decision-making capacity is severely compromised, as life becomes a matter of survival. This perhaps sounds overly dramatic, but when stress kicks in, I challenge anyone to be able to ‘think straight’! Apply that to the classroom with a hypervigilant child, and we can see clearly that we may well struggle to manage both our own, and the child’s emotions and behaviours.

This is where I think we can, and absolutely should, be using emotional intelligence (EQ) to mitigate against poor mental health and well-being, and thereby address the recruitment and retention crisis in our schools. Becoming more intentional in our actions can help us take greater responsibility for ourselves and others. This is not to say that I think teachers do not take responsibility – but I do think we are at a tipping point with our mental health, and therefore our sense of

efficacy and agency. Increasing austerity and budget constraints mean there is little recourse to outside help or training – but what we do have is our **self**.

So what is EQ? Put simply, it is understanding why we think, feel and act the way we do. EQ is an entirely learnable, measurable skill. It is not about navel-gazing, or obsessing about oneself; rather, it is coming to an understanding of **one’s self**.

So why should we? Think about a particularly difficult situation you have had to manage: how well do you think you managed it? What could you have done differently? What might have been the consequences if you had acted differently? This is EQ – knowing what your ‘pain’ points are, your stress points, and being able to mitigate against them quite deliberately so that you can manage situations more effectively, more productively and with greater self-confidence.

If you can be more intentional in your actions, thoughts and feelings, you can build an inner resilience based on knowing yourself well enough that you can manage life’s challenges. You can begin to work out what makes others tick – whether that is a child in your class, a colleague, your partner, your boss. You can therefore develop in others the same sort of



inner resilience that you have nurtured in yourself.

That is why we desperately need EQ to be taught explicitly. When we teach EQ to our students, we find **our selves** modelling the language, the positivity, the desire to be the best we can be. It helps us to better understand how our brains develop and function, and therefore how we can apply that knowledge to develop coping strategies. It helps us make optimal decisions, and teaches us that it is perfectly okay to not always get things right. Mostly though, I think being emotionally intelligent gives us back our sense of self, and therefore grows our confidence and efficacy.

Here in the North East, my colleagues and I are rolling out a pilot study across a number of schools (primary, secondary, alternative provision) implementing the Friends Resilience³ program. Created to address the issue of pupil well-being, it is a whole school program which gives pupils and adults a common language, one of compassion, kindness, respect and understanding. We are currently training teaching staff to become

facilitators so that they can deliver the programme in their own schools. As we work through the training package, it has been heartening to see how receptive the staff are to the key messages of the program. The power of the Friends Resilience program comes, I believe, from the fact that it is a whole school approach, embedded over time and infused in every single aspect of school life. This ensures the sustainability of the program so that, ultimately, the whole community can benefit. With EQ at its heart, it provides not just a toolbox of support for the child, but for the child's teacher too.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that as the program is delivered, the adults become more readily able to deal with the challenges of working in schools. Because Friends Resilience is based on the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy model, it works for **everybody**. If we get social and emotional learning right, then academic achievement follows. We all want our pupils to achieve their potential, but we must get it right for ourselves first – it is rather like the oxygen mask analogy: make sure you put yours on first before helping others!

³ <https://www.friendsresilience.org/> for more details



Book Review of O' Brien, T. (2015) Inner Story, Ideational Publishing

By Christine Challen

Although the Inner Story is not a thick book, at 227 pages, it does benefit a slow, focussed, and questioning read. The chapters and their titles reflect the purpose and order of thought processes required to promote personal and professional change. In particular the deliberate repetition at the beginning of the titles either “*understanding*” and/or “*Being*” further emphasises the need to focus on your inner mind/story before improving individual attributes within a positive mindset.

There are many sections that you will want to reread, consistently refer and take time to reflect on. This is not only to impact on your own “*Inner mind*” journey but if you are an educator, provide innovative and effective professional strategies that help to ensure the creation of a truly inclusive, empathetic and compassionate way of dealing with challenging behaviours both of adult and children.

In some of the chapters there is an opportunity to interact and question yourself which is a great way to both engage with the book as well as understand your own mind/inner story. The key message of the book being that “*it is impossible to develop and grow as a person unless you have a clear sense of self.*”

The first chapter defines Inner story as the story being continually written in your head as you are living it and how this is different from the one about your life. This is followed by chapters on how you change your inner story through understanding yourself, your behaviour and the flow of fear; which leads onto the “*being chapters*”; successful, happier, more confident, better leader and higher performing team; the final chapter; bringing together the others entitled understanding your changing story.

The Inner story is not directly meant as a self help or therapeutic book *per se* but I found it



to be invaluable and informative on how to make successful changes that would positively impact both personally and professionally. I particularly liked and related to the idea that *“relationships that are dependent on loyalty can become manipulative”* as well as the concept that self esteem is all about you as a person whereas self esteems are about some of you as a person and how this can change in different environments. It is a view which I now embrace and use as a *“coping strategy”* to support standing up for your own personal and professional values and not being *“loyal to a situation which does not fit your self esteems and results in affecting personal well being.”*

Most of us have been exposed to challenging behaviour whether as a parent or a teacher and how we deal with it is always a difficult choice. The majority of us will be familiar with the naughty chair or step, to tackle challenging behaviour of children. However although there is much debate about the high increase of exclusion in schools along with booths O’Brien believes this time out approach is not necessarily a suitable permanent solution.

He states that *“behaviour is a consequence of an interaction between both internal and external factors.”* In particular he urges us to take an interactive view of behaviour and instead of trying to change the person alter the environment and that ultimately includes the teaching techniques used. The strategies he uses include offering support and staying calm offering at least 15mins before *“sending out an invitation to them”* as well as using de-escalating language e.g. because, please and thank you. Such methods work and are much more likely to have better long term results in ways of providing pupils with a sense of belonging and purpose as well as truly enhancing *“social mobility”* within education.

The remaining chapters focus on how understanding our inner story can improve our personal status and allow us to become more successful confident and happier. O’Brien stresses the need to individually take responsibility for behaviour, to be consistently motivated and to set realistic, achievable and demanding goals to ensure success.

This is an excellent book that you will want to read and reread it provides invaluable and realistic techniques to deal with challenging



behaviour as well as the emotions and thought processes going on within it.

It is also an ideal resource for all who want to fully understand their inner story to enhance their future personal well being and success.

In a time when teacher well being is stretched to its limits this book will be a worthwhile reference to ensure teacher retention in the profession.



CollectivEd Thinking Out Loud

An interview with Cat Scutt

Please tell us who you are and what your current role in education is.

I'm Cat Scutt, and my main role in education - or at least the one that takes up the largest proportion of my time! - is as Director of Education and Research at the Chartered College of Teaching, the professional body for teachers. I'm also working on my PhD part-time at the UCL Institute of Education - I'm looking at the use of decision-making simulation in school leadership development.

Please reflect on an episode or period in your career during which your own learning helped you to develop educational practices which remain with you today. What was the context, how were you learning, and what was the impact?

I definitely learnt a huge amount and really developed my understanding of educational practice in the shift from being the 'trainee' to the 'trainer' - I think before that, I felt a lot of my practice was based on instinct. In reality, it was no doubt the result of my teacher training and professional experience, but the decisions I was making were quite tacit. As I moved to helping others to develop - as a PGCE and GTP mentor, as someone running training in use of technology to support teaching and learning, and as someone leading on a range

of pedagogy-focused projects - I had to be much more reflective about my practice and be more able to clearly articulate and explain what I was doing and why. I also became much more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. This had a huge influence on my own practice; I became a better teacher because of it.

Who has influenced your educational thinking, and in what ways has this allowed you to develop?

As someone working on the intersection of research and practice, I am definitely influenced by the work of both researchers and practitioners - and in particular by the relationship between the two. I think research and research engagement can be hugely valuable in understanding, and in turn improving, teaching and learning, but the role of teachers with all of their expertise is critically important in how research findings are interpreted and enacted. Sometimes you can see something in a piece of research and think 'oh yes, that's a really interesting idea', but it may be quite far removed from the reality for a teacher in a classroom who is working with all sorts of context-specific constraints and with a group of children who are far from homogenous. Talking to



academics and teachers together brings out all sorts of interesting thinking and ideas, for everyone involved.

Do you feel part of an educational ‘tribe’, and if so who are they and why do they matter to you?

One of the things I have always loved about working in education is how willing to support, help, and make a difference everyone is – and this has meant that I’ve actually felt very welcome in a whole range of (often quite varied) settings. Discussion, debate and challenge of ideas can be really important in driving our thinking as professionals, so I value the chance to engage with people outside of a single ‘tribe’, and knowing that we might disagree on the ‘how’, we’re all motivated by doing the best we can for the children and young people we support and for our colleagues.

When someone you meet tells you they are thinking about becoming a teacher what advice do you give them?

To join the Chartered College of Teaching, obviously! More seriously, to spend time in schools and talk to current teachers and teacher training providers so that they understand the routes available to them, and

the realities of teaching. The time in school is so important for that; it’s easy to see a lot of negatives about teaching presented in the media and online, so it can be easy to forget what a joy it is to work with children and young people – especially when you are in a supportive school with skilled teachers and effective leadership.

If you could change one thing which might enable more teachers to work and learn collaboratively in the future what would you do?

It’s an obvious but tricky one, because it’s all about having enough funding to do it! I’d increase non-contact time to give teachers more time to plan and work together – having an unmanageable workload doesn’t provide an environment for collaboration and professional growth, and you end up just trying to get your head down and plough through work rather than having the chance to think, reflect and improve your practice.

What is the best advice or support you have been given in your career? Who offered it and why did it matter?

Interestingly, it’s not really been through any formal sort of mentoring, coaching or training (although I did have the chance to work as a ‘guinea pig’ for an executive-coach-in-training last year, which was a really interesting



experience – he really pushed me to reflect more deeply and taking the time out of a packed schedule to actually talk and think things through was hugely worthwhile). What I have had, though, is a succession of managers who have really trusted me and valued my ideas, and have given me the

chance to try new things and develop new skills, while stopping me from making any really bad decisions, helping me to make things a success – and on occasion, telling me it was OK when things *weren't* a success! Essentially, a fine balance of challenge and support.



Thank you to our wonderful issue 7 contributors

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If you would like to contribute a research, practice insight or think piece working paper please see the guidance on our website <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/riches/our-research/professional-practice-and-learning/collectived/>

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Upcoming events and more information

July 4th 2019 CollectivED Knowledge Exchange Conference

National Conference in Birmingham

“The First CollectivED Knowledge Exchange: creating powerful professional learning through re-thinking coaching, mentoring and collaborative leadership in education”

Find out more at <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/events/school-events/collectived-knowledge-exchange-creating-powerful-professional-learning-in-education/>

You may like to note the following dates.

July 3rd 2019

Coaching and Mentoring in Education Research network meeting No. 3 – hosted by Birmingham City University (please email Rachel Lofthouse for details if you would like to join us).

To be added to our mailing list regarding these and other regional events please email CollectivED@leedsbeckett.ac.uk or keep an eye on twitter [@CollectivED1](https://twitter.com/CollectivED1).

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