



Issue 8

CollectivED Working Papers

Working Papers from
CollectivED; the Hub for
Mentoring and Coaching

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Editorial: Welcome to CollectivED Issue 8

[CollectivEd](#): The Hub for Mentoring and Coaching is the Research and Practice Centre is based in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University. It was established in 2017 by Rachel Lofthouse, Professor of Teacher Education. The aim of CollectivED 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. There are several strategic practices which support this and do so by positioning practitioners not only as research consumers but as recognised producers of research.

One of these is the publication of working papers written with a broad audience in mind. Teachers and school leaders are amongst the authors of each type of working paper; research working papers, including summaries of empirical research, case studies, action research, practice insight working papers which detail particular features of relevant practice, its context and the decision making that shapes it, and think-pieces

which offer opportunities to share opinions, reflections or critiques of education practice, research and/or policy.

In addition, CollectivEd hosts public events which provide opportunities for teachers and school leaders, and those working to support educational development (including researchers, consultants and teacher educators) to share practice and research evidence and enter into robust discussion. To date these have included events with a focus on coaching in education, supporting teachers to teach for metacognition, and a consideration of school CPD and teacher wellbeing practices. While the work of the centre is relatively new there is a genuine sense that a new space is being constructed in which teachers play key roles as it creates, contributes and communicates new knowledge through building new connections and collaborations.



Welcome to our eighth 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.

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.



Cognitive coaching for professional development of early career teachers, are there any links?

A research working paper by Daveena Patel

Abstract

Teachers are continually required to develop their skills and attributes to improve classroom practice for effective teaching and ultimately school improvement. Professional development is one area amongst a plethora of government initiatives aimed at raising standards within schools. Teaching is one of the few professions in which early career teachers, those in their initial training and NQT induction year, have as much responsibility as their experienced colleagues.

This study used a form of cognitive coaching as a developmental tool for teachers in their NQT induction year to determine the links between coaching and professional development. Eight NQTs on a coaching program within a secondary school were given a questionnaire to ascertain the impact they felt coaching had on their professional development. A mixed-method approach was used whereby the questionnaire design provided both qualitative and quantitative data. An interview with the Director of the Teaching School was also conducted as an alternative perspective on the impact of

coaching on the NQTs. The results indicate that cognitive coaching procedures had a positive impact on NQT teachers' professional development as it helped improve their reflective capabilities and confidence as classroom practitioners. An unexpected finding was that coaching also helped develop resilience amongst these individuals. The results obtained from this study can be used to inform and direct the use of coaching as a professional development tool for early career teachers within education. The data also provides avenues for further investigation of the links between coaching and professional development.

Introduction

Within the United Kingdom (UK) numerous policy-driven initiatives, such as the recommendation of teaching standards, organisational restructuring, improved self-management opportunities and professional development have been established due to pressures faced by the government to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and, therefore, standards in



schools (Rhodes *et al*, 2004). 'For many teachers in the UK, professional development commences with initial teacher training, and in schools continues into the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) induction year' (*ibid*, p.1). Teachers then continue to engage in professional development (PD), by necessity or choice, throughout their career often referred to as continuing professional development (CPD). It is currently known that coaching and mentoring both play an essential role in supporting teacher PD (Panayiotou, 2012). The activities of coaching and mentoring, as PD tools for teachers, shade into each other depending on the development or learning they are implemented to bring about. The way coaching and mentoring are used within schools depends on the context. There is no uniform model that can be prescribed for an effective coaching or mentoring model. The differences between coaching and mentoring have been distinguished by the 'CUREE', who developed a National Framework for schools, providing guidelines for effective coaching and mentoring of teachers in 2005. They identified mentoring as a more structured process for supporting professional learners on induction into the profession as a whole, based on identifying goals, providing feedback and assessing practice. Coaching, on the

other hand, is based on a coach asking good questions to the coachee to establish confidence in the relationship and listening effectively. Through this coaching aims to help individuals to grow self-direction, confidence and the ability to identify and get challenging and personal goals for themselves to develop as teachers (CUREE, 2005). Coaching is a model used to assist with teacher development, unlike mentoring, is not used to evaluate teachers.

Coaching can be described as a structured one-to-one learning relationship between a coach and a coachee aimed at developing skills and improving performance in the coachee (Fletcher, 2012). Cognitive coaching in particular is a process where teachers explore their thinking behind their teaching practice (Garmston *et al*, 1993). According to Garmston and colleagues:

'Each person seems to maintain a cognitive map, only partially conscious. In Cognitive Coaching, questions asked by the coach reveal to the teacher areas of that map that may not be complete or consciously developed. When teachers talk out loud about their thinking, their decisions become clearer to them, and their awareness increases.'
(Garmston *et al*, 1993 p.57)



Through this conversational process the reflection occurred or learned helps 'develop problem-solving skills as teachers examine their experience, generate alternatives, and evaluate their actions' (*ibid*, p.60) to develop their teaching practice.

Coaching

The most widely used coaching model to train coaches is the GROW model (Passmore *et al*, 2013). The GROW model outlines four main stages in the coaching process:

G – GOAL. What do you want?

R – REALITY. What is happening now?

O – OPTIONS. What could you do?

W – WILL. What will you do?

(Barnes, 2010 p.12)

This approach highlights the key aspects of what coaching is and does: it enables people to grow, develop their capabilities, achieve high performance and gain fulfillment (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). For the use of GROW to be effective, coaches must internalise such models so that they become an unconscious ability. Coaches should use their Socratic questioning skills to guide the coaching conversation around the four main categories of GROW. The use of this during coaching sessions must not be regimented

because 'if coaching becomes too formulaic, it detracts from the human connection and interferes with the magical space of relaxed concentration where real value emerges' (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005, p.230).

Therefore, coaches should use the model within a cyclic nature during coaching sessions to avoid the coaching environment becoming too formulated and linear and remain a fluid and natural environment. This would also facilitate the development of a good coaching relationship for effective coaching.

A personal opinion of what coaching is that it is a guided conversation with oneself. A good coach will help guide this conversation to encourage the coachee to take actions and be able to commit to them in order to achieve their goals. However, for coaching to be effective the coach needs to have the relevant skills to orchestrate coaching sessions effectively. According to Starr (2003) attributes of successful coaches include: a commitment to supporting the individual; a focus on what the coachee thinks and experiences; a capacity to build conversation based on equality; a genuine belief that the coachee can generate perfect solutions; and, finally, an ability to build the coaching relationship on truth, openness and trust (Starr, 2003). More importantly, 'before any



coaching to enhance performance can begin, the coach needs to build a working relationship with the coachee' (Passmore, 2006 p.2), without this little or no progress can be made from coaching. To build a good relationship the coach must be able to 'relate sensitively to learners and work through agreed processes to build trust and confidence' (CUREE, 2005 p.4) because without trust and sensitivity coaching is likely to be unsuccessful (Caplan, 2003).

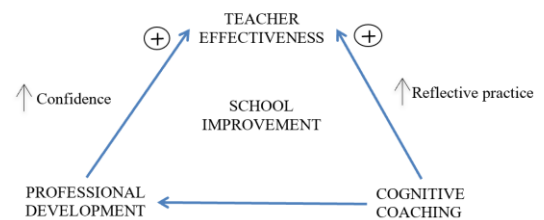
Method

One way to answer the research question is to access individuals that have had cognitive coaching and ask them about their perception of the process, specifically how it has impacted their professional development as trainee teachers. Professional development can be linked to their confidence, ambition and the development of their teaching practice throughout the year. To establish if any changes have occurred since introducing the coaching program, these individual perceptions also need to be supported by additional evidence from staff that are able to comment on the development of the cohort and compare it to previous cohorts of trainees who did not receive coaching.

This mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) study researches how induction-year teachers who are on a coaching program in an inner London secondary school perceive the impact of coaching on their professional development. Data was collected via questionnaire and interview.

Key findings

This study demonstrated that cognitive coaching can be linked to changes in teacher attitudes or beliefs, a change in classroom practice, improved reflective practice and increased confidence.



A personal depiction of the links established through the cognitive coaching program for NQTs

Within these broader findings responses highlight an importance placed on the confidential and non-judgemental aspects of coaching as reasons for the development of a coaching relationship based on trust to create a positive environment for development. Whilst these findings were consistent amongst most of the coachees, there were some variations that meant coaching bonds



could not be created. An unexpected finding was that coaching seems to have helped develop more resilient early career teachers.

Conclusion

Coaching has the potential to be a powerful strategy for professional development of early career teachers and ultimately school improvement within education. However, to gain the most out of coaching, schools must appreciate how its effects are mediated through a finely tuned balance of variables from individuals and the organisation.

Coaching will appeal to teachers because it meets the needs of professional development and reflects the personal values for individuals (Lofthouse *et al*, 2010). It can be deployed throughout a school, however, due to the sensitive nature of coaching, care must be taken when implementing a whole school coaching culture. For it to be successful, heads, leaders, teachers and assistants must all be open to the value of coaching. Without this the implementation of an impactful coaching culture for teacher development is likely to be unsuccessful. The process of training to become a coach can be deemed a developmental skill within itself. The questioning skills developed through coaching sessions can be transferred to the classroom to improve teaching practice. Leaders that

adopt features of coaching within their management style can develop a more collaborative culture within teams and individuals. In terms of skills as a leader, the most effective instructional leadership includes talking with teachers to promote reflection and professional growth (Blase & Blase, 1999). Many of these characteristics can be developed through coaching. Team meetings can take on features of coaching by providing time for reflection and development of teachers. Heads can adopt the use of a coaching to effectively identify and develop their own leaders (Barnes, 2010).

This study draws implications for educational policy and practice as it supports development opportunities for NQTs and for continuing professional development for teachers. Eliminating an emphasis on accountability and providing opportunities for training to become the responsibility of practitioners rather than expert advisors who have left the classroom is a fundamental part of successful teacher development (Baars *et al*, 2014; McAleavy & Elwick, 2015; Lofthouse *et al*, 2010). Ofsted (2010) also emphasise the need for opportunities for discussions that are free from concerns about performance management, accountability and judgment from peers that allows teacher to become



more reflective practitioners, much like this coaching program offers. Coaching has the potential to be a successful tool for professional development of teachers within the education sector.

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The Thinking School – The value of Coaching

A research working paper by Kulvarn Atwal

Abstract

Between 2008 and 2016, I completed my Professional Doctorate in Education. My thesis highlighted the factors that impact upon teacher engagement in professional learning activities, and this included a particular focus on Coaching. The study explored the factors that teachers perceive to impact upon their engagement in wider professional learning experiences in primary schools. The extent to which the learning environments in schools afford formal and informal opportunities for teacher learning was presented as a factor for consideration. The study took a case study approach to investigating teacher perceptions of engagement in action research.

Questionnaires with twenty-four teachers and interviews with twelve teachers across two schools resulted in qualitative data which was explored and interpreted for emerging trends. Data analysis was influenced by a constructivist interpretation of grounded theory to provide deeper understandings of patterns that emerged in relation to perceptions of action research and

experiences of workplace learning. This study identified that there is a complex patchwork of influences that impact upon teacher engagement in professional learning, and that significant factors in this engagement include the expansiveness of the institutional learning environments and individual dispositions to learning. These factors influence individual teacher learning experiences in different ways. A model for teacher learning was presented in the study that reflects the key factors that need to be taken into consideration when planning for formal and informal teacher professional learning activities in primary schools.

Coaching is central in this model of a ‘dynamic learning community’, which in turn is central to my description of a ‘thinking school’.

The value of Coaching

Coaching is a fundamental professional learning activity for all the staff of the thinking school. It supports the development of positive individual dispositions to learning, both as coach and coachee. As an experienced coach myself, it remains the most powerful



learning activity that I engage in. Through coaching, individuals become more solution-focused and are able to self-assess and find answers to complex questions. Whether it is dealing with a difficult parent, leading a team of teachers or managing your workload, coaching gives you the skills to positively deal with the range of challenges a teacher faces.

I will discuss the coaching process in more detail. However, the easiest way to understand it is to consider it as an activity that enables you to explore a challenging aspect of your practice in greater detail. An area of practice that you would like to improve. The job of the coach is to question you in such a way that you are enabled to consider potential solutions for yourself; it is not simply about offering advice. Everybody in the thinking school can benefit from coaching – from the NQT in their very first year to the headteacher with 30 years' experience. Andy Murray is one of the best tennis players in the world, but he employs a coach to enable him to be even better. Coaching is about taking someone from where they currently are in their practice and enabling them to improve.

Coaching skills cannot be developed through a one-day course; they have to be continually

developed over time. Through ongoing engagement in coaching, teachers develop both an understanding of the model and an awareness of how to use coaching to develop themselves and team members. As a school leader, I am actively aware of the significant positive impact on all staff and children of working at the centre of a team of teachers who are now experienced coaches. I have been involved in an action learning set (a pure form of coaching that avoids any type of mentoring or advice-giving) for over 15 years and it is one of the most valuable professional or personal learning experiences that I have ever been involved in. It has enabled me to evaluate difficult situations I have faced and arrive at informed actions that develop and improve my practice. It has also given me the skills to effectively self-evaluate and problem-solve in my practice.

Coaching is fundamental to the culture of learning in the school. Were I to discuss the general principles for coaching, I would highlight: its impact on professional learning; its value to staff self-assessment and reflection; its influence on the building of relational trust; its positive impact on our communication with children and parents; and its value in developing the emotional climate across the school. It enables each



teacher to understand exactly where they are in their learning, where they need to get to and how best to get there. (Indeed, that is the etymology of the word 'coach' in this sense – a tutor who transports (as in a coach and horses) a student to greater understanding.)

As a headteacher, I can acknowledge that schools are operating in an environment of continual change and need to continually improve. In recent years, the expected standards for children at each Key Stage in primary schools have been raised considerably. In order to respond to these changes, the thinking school requires teachers that are not fixed in their thinking and are equally open to continual individual and collective improvement. For us to achieve well, we need to build increased personal learning capacity in both adults and children. Coaching is at the centre of learning for teachers, helping them to understand their current effectiveness in their roles. Through a trusting partnership with a skilled coach, they are able to focus on their personal learning and arrive at individually contextualised solutions. If all teachers are engaging in coaching, the collective capacity for learning and growth across the school is maximised.

As you become more experienced as a coach, you are stronger in both assessing and developing others and assessing and developing yourself. Coaching is fundamental to what I have described in the thinking school as 'quality change'. Going right back to my conversation with Professor Black all those years ago, quality change can be seen as the antithesis to making knee-jerk reactions. It's when we take the time to deeply reflect upon practice and find solutions to improve children's learning and outcomes. Quality change through coaching is underpinned by teachers having the mindset that we are continually growing and reflecting on our own learning and our impact upon the children each and every day. Coaching enables us to focus on learning rather than teaching. Through coaching, we are helping our teachers to learn about themselves and their practice. Developing skills of coaching can only enhance our effectiveness as learning-focused leaders.

When to mentor and when to coach How do we find the balance between mentoring and coaching? The easiest way to distinguish between mentoring and coaching is to remember that mentoring includes the giving of advice. In coaching, we simply question. Within the thinking school, leaders are



allocated time for coaching sessions. However, there is no reason why these sessions cannot contain a combination of mentoring and coaching. Coaching also does not have to be restricted to specific sessions that are allocated to it. Once a person has developed good coaching skills, they will be expected to use these skills where appropriate in their professional interactions with colleagues. This can include informal conversations in the corridor.

I see the teachers developing mentoring skills quite naturally in their professional practice; when they encounter colleagues with potential problems, they automatically look to find solutions for them. This is because we see ourselves as part of a caring profession, and we want to help our colleagues. It's also because we don't have the time in our busy working lives for deeper learning-focused conversations. But although we may have solved a problem in the short term, we may not have supported our colleague's enhanced professional learning and understanding. Through coaching questions, we would encourage deeper consideration of the problem. Finding their own solutions will support their learning and build their capacity to self-assess and problem-solve in the future.

Most interactions between colleagues involve a combination of coaching and mentoring, and it is important to distinguish between the two. I regard mentoring as including guidance and advice and associate it with professionals new to their role, such as NQTs or new subject leaders. Coaching relationships do not preclude opportunities to give direct advice. However, it is important to develop pure coaching skills and these are definitely not about giving advice. When developing staff as coaches, I make the distinction between offering advice and asking questions – when in doubt, ask a question! My favourite coaching question is, 'What would you like to see happen?' It is the skill of a coach to listen actively and ask the most thought-provoking question at the right time to challenge the coachee and to empower them to develop their understanding.

It is important that all the staff team are equally committed to the coaching process. It can be a difficult experience and a new way of working. Particularly challenging for both parties is moving away from giving and receiving advice, to asking and receiving questions. School leaders in the thinking school have to be careful to communicate explicitly why you are committed to coaching and its value. You have to commit to its



development over time. All of our staff team, including support staff and the office team, took part in a professional learning programme of 30-minute sessions each week for a term. During this time, they developed a theoretical understanding of coaching and were given opportunities to observe and participate in coaching sessions, both as coach and as coachee.

Coaching is the first professional learning activity we engage our NQTs in. We view it as the vehicle to collectively transport the school from where we are now to where we want to be. At an individual level, coaching is about empowering teachers to have the skills to grow for themselves. In hierarchical systems in schools, teachers are often disempowered by constantly being told what to do, and monitored to check they are doing it. They become dependent on affirmation from above; whereas in the thinking school, teachers are supported to question and learn for themselves.

In implementing coaching across the school, we used the GROW model to guide our practice. It was introduced by Whitmore (2009) and colleagues in the 1980s and we found it a relatively straightforward

framework to enable the staff team to develop their understanding of the coaching process. As time has gone by and our teachers have developed their expertise as coaches, they have become more flexible in the way they use the model. The GROW model comprises the four key steps in the coaching model:

- Goals – the coachee’s awareness of their aspirations. The goal stage enables the coachee to consider the area of their learning that they wish to discuss and what their aims are. An example question might be: ‘What would you like to be different when you leave this conversation?’
- Reality – their current situation in relation to those aspirations. The reality stage is about establishing the level of the coachee’s understanding. It is also the stage at which the coach can ask any questions for clarification, such as, ‘What is working well right now?’
- Options – the choices and possibilities available to them. The options stage is all about inviting the coachee to identify the range of potential options for what they could do. A question might be: ‘What possibilities for action can you see?’



- Will – the actions they commit to undertake to move towards those goals. The will stage is about identifying the actions the coachee will commit to taking. Having developed their understanding of the current situation, and the choices they have, they commit to key actions. The coach might ask at this stage, ‘On a scale of 1–10, how committed and motivated are you to doing it?’ The first stage of the next coaching session will be to ask the coachee about how close they are to completing these actions and the outcomes.

Our staff have become more creative and reflective through coaching. If they have a problem, I believe they are less likely to go to colleagues and leaders to have a moan; more likely to come with potential solutions. Through coaching, teachers are empowered to improve constantly; and we want them to empower children in the school in the same way. Coaching makes staff feel valued and listened to. The coaching model includes appreciative enquiry, whereby teachers recognise their strengths and what they do well. They can then think clearly about their current situation as a starting point for improvement.

For many staff at our school, coaching has transformed their practice. There are countless examples to illustrate this and I’m aware that for many of my colleagues, coaching is the most-valued professional learning activity they engage in. One teaching assistant discussed how she altered her mindset when managing a difficult conversation with a parent. She explained how she would previously have reacted negatively to a parent criticising a teacher. On this occasion, following on from what she had learned through coaching, she gave the parent the opportunity to say everything they had to say and just listened. (In coaching, our staff are trained to reflect back to someone exactly what they have said using the same words – so repeating verbatim rather than interpreting. By doing this, we demonstrate that we are actively listening. We also enable the person to hear what they have said in their own words – an experience that doesn’t happen very often for most people.) Rather than provoking the parent or worsening the situation, this tactic caused the parent to feel valued and listened to, and her demeanour changed – she was shocked when hearing back the things she said and became more conciliatory. During a PLM, the teaching assistant presented this scenario back to the wider staff team as an example of coaching



that had enabled her to deal with a challenging situation in a more positive way than her previous experiences.

In another example, a leader used a coaching conversation to prepare a team leader for having a difficult conversation with a colleague. Coaching is about empowering colleagues to find solutions to challenging situations they are facing. They are far more likely to commit to a solution that they have arrived at for themselves.

A consistent approach is needed to develop a positive culture for coaching in the thinking school. Coaching conversations have to be both authentic and regular, and participants have to believe in them. Their purpose is to build on existing strengths, and develop positive individual dispositions to learning, so that teachers are committed to continual quality change, enhancing the emotional climate in the school.

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Coaching for a Culture of Thinking

A practice insight working paper by

Cameron Paterson & Chris Munro

Introduction

Coaching can be a catalyst for change by creating a sense of possibility and a motivation to act. Could the elusive concept of a coaching culture in schools actually mean a culture of *thinking* as proposed by Ritchhart (2015)? According to Ritchhart, school culture is shaped by the “dynamic enactment” of our individual and collective values – a story in the making. Coaching relates to this concept in a couple of ways. First, coaching provides a vehicle for individuals and groups of teachers to engage in the dynamic enactment of their *new* story. In coaching we sometimes describe this as the ‘preferred future’. Here, coaching is positioned as a support for, and driver of, incremental change over time. Secondly, a coaching approach, where teachers consciously use coaching skills and techniques with students can result in deeper levels of critical thinking and reflection as well as enhancing student voice and agency.

Munro, Barr & van Nieuwerburgh (in preparation) propose the following definition of a “whole-school coaching culture for learning”:

“A whole-school coaching culture for learning exists when education leaders, teachers, support staff, students, parents and other partners, intentionally use coaching and coaching approaches in a range of conversational contexts. For this to happen, coaching approaches should be widely understood and skilfully utilised across the school community. In such a culture, a coaching approach to conversations about learning will need to become part of an organisation’s ‘way of being’ with appropriate resourcing and explicit integration into the school’s strategic plans.”

Could it follow then, that a ‘coaching approach’ is an intentional conversational approach designed to *service the thinking* of the other and to support the growth of all learners in the community? In this article we explore the overlapping philosophy, intent and strategies of coaching and those of teachers striving to engender thinking dispositions in their students.

Stories About School

We all have stories about our school experiences. Often these personal 'old school stories' can be about being passive and obedient. A student's job was to achieve good grades and to please the teacher. Students were publicly sorted and ranked. Schools were institutionalised places focused on conformity. If we are not intentional, these old school stories can become our default settings. Reflecting on the qualities of past learning experiences can help illuminate our understanding of the qualities of the culture we want to create for our students today – in coaching terms 'our preferred future'. Often these 'new school stories' include creating more personalised relationships with students, developing learners' independence, curiosity, and the disposition to think and ask questions, and making learning engaging.

Tensions

As we try to make these new stories a reality, inevitably some challenges and conflicts surface. We deal better with them by reframing these challenges as "tensions". Tensions cannot be eliminated, but they can be managed. We can address tensions by exploring different ways to shift our practices,

even just a little, in the right direction. We all have a tendency to create dichotomies. All or nothing. This practice or that practice. In reality change happens incrementally, in small steps. Initially, a realistic goal might be to make an aspect of our practice look more like the desired state – *closer* to a '10' than it is at present. This is where coaching can be a powerful catalyst for change by creating a greater sense of possibility and a compulsion to act. It does more than build self-efficacy, it enables agency – the ability to act within one's context.

One tension is the pull between the culture we want to create and the one that presently surrounds us in our schools. Maybe school leaders or curriculum authorities are responsible for a "confining" culture, but students or parents can also stifle our vision because they think education should look a certain way. Even if we want our students to ask questions and conduct inquiry, they may expect us to spoon-feed them. We need to remember that change takes time, and that steps to involve everyone into the enculturation process will help. This is where a coaching approach to adult learning and a Cultures of Thinking approach in the classroom can be mutually beneficial.



The most frequent challenge, especially with secondary teachers, is the focus on covering the curriculum and the pervasive testing accountability culture. In many schools there is a belief that our most important job is to prepare students to be successful in exams. In New South Wales, the Education Minister recently wrote (Stokes, 2018), *'Anaesthetised by the data around us – and hypnotised by the neo-liberal fixation with quantification – we place inordinate emphasis on tests ...that reduce a student's educational journey to a number'*.

While we might want to eliminate the emphasis on "accountability through testing", this is not likely to happen any time soon. This is when looking at the challenge as a tension is helpful. We have to try to get away from thinking about it as an either/or dilemma. We can do both. Creating a culture of thinking will likely better prepare students for assessments. A healthy culture of thinking often leads to high performance in tests.

A Culture of Thinking

A culture of thinking is a place where a group's collective, as well as individual, thinking is valued, visible and actively promoted. The process of creating a culture of

thinking is about becoming aware of the eight cultural forces that are present in our classrooms and schools, and learning to leverage them effectively to build an atmosphere in which thinking is clearly valued. It is about enculturation, not training (Ritchhart, 2015).

- **Expectations** – *How do you focus on the value of thinking and learning as opposed to mere completion of "work"?*
- **Language** – *How do you provide students with the vocabulary for describing and reflecting on thinking?*
- **Time** – *How do you provide time for exploring topics in more depth?*
- **Modelling** – *How do you model your own thinking so that the process of thinking is shared and made visible?*
- **Opportunities** – *How do you provide purposeful activities that require students to engage in thinking?*
- **Routines** – *How do you scaffold students' thinking?*
- **Interactions** – *How do you respect and value other ideas and thinking in a spirit of collaborative inquiry?*
- **Environment** – *How do you display the process of thinking and arrange space to facilitate thoughtful interactions?*

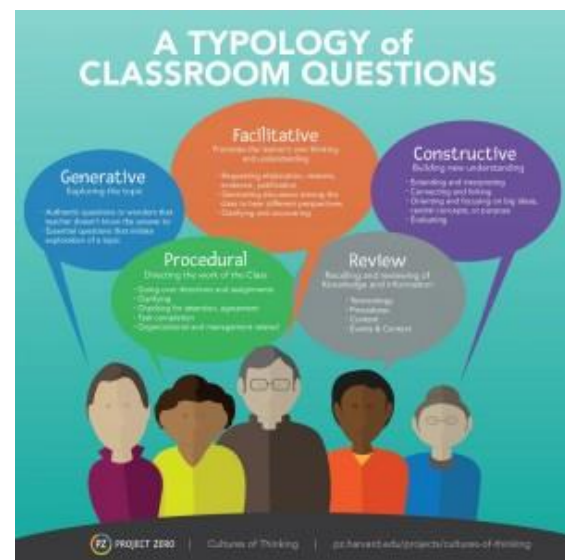


Two of these cultural forces: language and interactions, which are also central to effective coaching, will be explored in more depth below.

Our language is visible evidence of what we value. What we say and how we say it reveals what we believe about learning and we must reflect on how our goals align with what we say and do. When there is a lack of alignment, we confuse our students. This requires us to specifically choose language patterns, questions, and words. For example, if we believe that learning is a social endeavour, then using ‘we’ and ‘us’, instead of ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘they’, is a way we can harness language to support this belief.

A fundamental principle of the appreciative inquiry approach to organisational change (Cooperrider, 2017) is that “words create worlds”. This emphasises the powerful role that language plays in how we make sense of the world. Our choice of words conveys much about how we see the world. When we are helped, for example in coaching, to think through complex situations or concepts we are invited to find the language that best captures our thinking. The greatest benefit here is to the talker (learner) not the listener (coach or teacher) as they hear their thinking aloud and refine their choice of words.

Ritchhart (2015, p. 221) writes, ‘*Our questioning helps to define our classrooms, to give it its feel and energy – or lack thereof. Questions are culture-builders, linking students, teachers and content together.*’ As teachers, we all want to ask good questions, the kind that can drive learning and elicit deep thinking. Ron identifies five main types of questions teachers ask.



(Image credit: Project Zero)

When teachers start to focus on developing a culture of thinking, their questioning tends to swing away from procedural and review questions towards facilitative questions that push student thinking and make thinking visible. Intentionality is the important feature here. Similarly, anything we do in ‘coach mode’ should be ‘in service of the other person’s thinking’. A skilled coach and teacher



understands the magical quality of the ‘right question at the right time’ to transport the recipient to a new place in their thinking - a place of new possibilities, of alternative views, or a more positive and compelling future. As Cooperrider (2017) famously stated, “people live in the worlds our questions create”.

How we listen is key to asking the best questions. As teachers and adults who spend much of our time in conversation of one form or another throughout our working day, we tend to assume that we understand the concept of active listening and that we should be pretty good at it. Unfortunately, most of us do not listen nearly as well as we could. The quality of our listening is as much dependent on our attitude and self-talk as it is on the obvious outward signals of body language, empathising, encouraging, affirming and paraphrasing. We are unable to do these things with authenticity if we are not truly present in that moment and genuinely want to hear what the other person has to say. A high level of intentionality is required to truly hear the person doing the talking.

Project Zero’s Daniel Wilson (class, 2010), studied group learning in adventure racing teams for his doctoral thesis and he found that the most successful teams were far more likely to use conditional language when they

were lost than the teams that were not so successful. “We might be here” rather than “This is where we are.” Teams that use conditional language are better at pulling together, pooling ideas, and harnessing group knowledge. In coaching, we talk about using provisional or invitational language.

In contrast, when absolute language is used, it seems defensive and assertive. When teachers use conditional language, students quickly catch on that they are looking for collective meaning-making and building on others’ thinking, rather than trying to guess correct answers. In coaching this is often referred to as a ‘way of being’ and it implies genuine curiosity about how others are thinking. Wilson’s research also found that the successful teams that were using conditional language were more likely to ask each other questions and more likely to build on each other’s ideas.

Sometimes, the next coach/teacher response should not be another question. A clarifying statement or paraphrase serves several purposes: it demonstrates active listening; it builds trust; it helps the coachee hear their words back; it invites further clarification, expansion or modification; it helps summarise and break down complex issues; it can help them make connections; and it can help order



their thoughts, options and next steps.

Questions and clarifying statements can be grouped under three general headings that suggest their intent at different stages in a discourse:

Openers	Expanders	Closers
– inviting expansive responses	- encouraging divergent thinking and further clarity	– summarizing and seeking precision
Tell me about... What's on your mind? What do you think about...?	What else? And what else...? Tell me more about "..." So, it sounds like... What I think I'm hearing is... When you said "...", I'm wondering what you were thinking...? What would that look like? Sound like? What would you be noticing if...? What would others be noticing?	What's become clearer now? Let me see if I've got this right... So, what I think we've arrived at is... What will... When will... How... Who...

Moving Forward

Focusing on the cultural forces of language and interactions are just two ways that we can create a culture of thinking in our classrooms. Creating a culture of thinking is not a “quick fix” or something that can be simply installed in a classroom. Creating a culture of thinking takes a long time, it is an ongoing process of small steps that needs constant attention. Understanding this process of enculturation holds the key to the creation of the dynamic learning communities we seek.

In the same vein, coaches partner with teachers to relentlessly pursue iterative change, constantly inquiring about what success looks like. Coaching focuses more on supporting teachers than on accountability. Coaching promotes a culture of trust, instead of an audit and micromanagement culture. We know that the extent of trust among adults in schools strongly predicts positive student learning outcomes. Help-giving and help-seeking is a sign of a strong learning community. Ultimately a coaching approach, or an intentional conversational approach designed to service the thinking of someone else, creates the culture of thinking we are seeking to develop.



The authors would like to express their sincere thanks to Faraday de la Camara for her contributions to the thinking in this article, which builds on the thinking of many

participants in Harvard's Project Zero Creating Cultures of Thinking online course over several years. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

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Fostering Research Orientation in an International Setting in Language Teacher Education

A Research Working Paper by Götz Schwab and Mareike Oesterle

Abstract

This article introduces an innovative study programme which was developed in the context of an Erasmus+ project; proPIC - promoting professionalism, innovation and transnational collaboration in second language learning and teaching. The study programme, a one-year course framework, is currently implemented at five European universities in the UK, Spain, Sweden, and Germany and will be further refined in course of the proPIC project. The project runs from September 2017 until September 2020. In this article, the authors will focus on the element of research orientation that is integrated in the study programme to promote continuing professional development.

Introduction

The proPIC project, ‘Promoting professionalism, innovation and transnational collaboration in foreign and second language

learning and teaching – integrating research-orientation and mobile technologies in teacher education’, is an Erasmus+ Project (www.propiceuropa.com) which was initiated by Karlsruhe University of Education (Germany) and includes four other partners from the field of teacher education: Kiel University (Germany), the University of Borås (Sweden), the University of Barcelona (Spain), and Newcastle University (UK). The project, which runs from September 2017 until September 2020, intends to develop a study programme for future language teachers that integrates research orientation¹, transnational collaboration, and the use of mobile technologies. By promoting professionalism, digitalization and internationalization at each of the five universities in which this programme is trialed and implemented, the project partners aim at developing a core course framework that can be integrated in different international curricula in higher

¹ In the proPIC project, the term research orientation refers to an approach that integrates practice-oriented tasks and activities which promote the awareness and know-how that future teachers need in order

to improve their own practices and develop professionally through the use of practitioner research. (cf. Mann & Walsh 2017)



education systems in the field of language teacher education.

The project's objectives and outputs

The overarching idea of the proPIC project evolved from our own teaching experience at Higher Education Institution (HEI) level as well as different projects we have conducted over the years where a number of core issues became salient. It was our main objective to bring together these issues in one project that is tailored to the needs of foreign language teachers of the 21st century: digitalization, international collaboration and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or the notion of lifelong learning in the field of one's own profession as a (language) teacher.

In line with the overall European policy to improve the quality of teacher education and stimulate innovation and transnational partnerships (European Commission 2018), the project partners' main objective is to develop an adaptable and innovative study programme (Figure 1) for in-service language teacher education at university level that creatively combines research-orientation, transnational collaboration and the use of mobile technologies. The term 'study programme' in this project refers to a

conceptual course framework, which the project partners have begun to implement in their individual local curricula, being the equivalent of 6-8 European credit points. The project partners intend to test and adjust the study programme over the course of the project. The study programme itself (see Figure 1) consists of two courses, comprising five different modules (I.A-I.C, II.A-II.B) and one 'study week', a five-day stay abroad at one of the partner institutions. All in all, there will be three cohorts and each programme cohort runs for approximately one year, depending on the local institutional conditions.

Over the course of three years the partners aim at developing the following project outputs, which will all be part of the final study programme:

- ***A theoretical framework and practice-oriented cases of CPD*** in the context of language teacher education, which will be presented in the form of an interactive online handbook (modules I.A and I.B). This handbook comprises not only theoretical descriptions, but also a pool of practice-based exemplary cases, which are tied to a range of interactive, problem-oriented tasks that were collaboratively designed by the project



partners and will be expanded in course of the project.

- Seven **interactive tutorials** in the form of interactive iBooks will promote the use of mobile technologies and digital methods (i.e. e-portfolios), as well as the application of various research methods and instruments (i.e. Video Enhanced Observation, Haines & Miller 2016).
- At the heart of the study programme we established a **study week**, a five-day stay abroad in which all students are asked to participate. It will facilitate intercultural learning and transnational networking on the level of future teachers (Wernisch 2016) as well as among the teacher educators involved. Students will work in

national and international teams to conduct their own research projects – partially before, partially during the study week – using a variety of digital tools.

- These innovative products are to be evaluated based on **assessment criteria** which the partners will develop collaboratively. The criteria are to be one of the overall project outputs.
- Furthermore, the project outputs will include a range of individual **e-portfolios** that are be created not only by the participating students, but also by the teacher educators themselves. These e-portfolios will help to evaluate the study programme and serve as the basis to conduct further research.

COURSE I			COURSE II			final conference (June 2020)
Module I.A	Module I.B	Module I.C	Study week	Module II.A	Module II.B	
<p>course introduction</p> <p>get in touch with the students from the other partner institutions (slack, flipgrid)</p> <p>f-2-f / online</p>	<p>input</p> <p>theoretical framework (CPD, good-practice examples)</p> <p>research project</p> <p>develop research question</p> <p>f-2-f / online</p>	<p>do at least 4 interactive tutorials</p> <p>develop your research design</p> <p>get individual online coachings</p> <p>online</p>	<p>visit a partner university</p> <p>collaborate in transnational groups</p> <p>visit a local school</p> <p>short stay abroad (5 days)</p>	<p>finalise your research project and create your creative outputs</p> <p>get individual coaching</p> <p>online</p>	<p>present your results and creative outputs</p> <p>final discussion</p> <p>f-2-f</p>	<p>optional</p> <p>submit a proposal and present your results at an international conference</p> <p>f-2-f</p>
constant reflection through e-portfolios						

Figure 1 proPIC study programme

Perspectives on integrating research orientation in language teacher education

A core element of the study programme is research orientation, i.e. integrating a research- or evidence-based approach which is also referred to as practitioner research (Zeichner & Noffke 2001; Mann & Walsh 2017). In line with this understanding, Action Research (Burns 2010) has lately become more and more prominent - not only in language teacher education (Allwright 2005; Farrell 2007; Burns 2010; Borg 2013; Mann & Walsh 2017), but in teacher education in general (Kansanen et al. 2000; Toom et al. 2008). The idea behind research orientation is to train future teachers to use research in their everyday work and to become actively engaged in their own professional development (cf. Mann & Walsh 2017). As Dewey (1997) already emphasised the relevance of inquiry, the importance of having some kind of 'evidence' to reflect upon, Mann and Walsh point out that "[d]ata-led accounts are essential since they provide the kind of evidence which promotes understandings of reflection." (Mann & Walsh 2017, 17) In order to make sense of one's own practices, i.e. to reflect and improve, one needs to collect evidence that provides a basis to study educational problems and produce educational knowledge (cf. Zeichner & Noffke 2001). Our students are compelled to collect

evidence by having an individual e-portfolio. Hence, we aim to foster a general research and inquiry orientation among participating student teachers. Students not only have to keep track of their individual development, but also reflect on their research activities conducted in national and/or international teams. Byman et al. (2009) found out that students who took part in research-oriented university courses appreciated this approach with regard to their own development. Byman et al. (2009) concluded that research "is required in order to learn to reflect on a more abstract level of pedagogical theory making" (ibid., 80)

To promote first hand research experience, our participating students are requested to work on self-developed research questions, to fulfil small assignments that support the use of distinct research methods and instruments, as well as to conduct a small research project on their own. Based upon this, they create individual outputs that include creatively their research findings (i.e. animation, video production, video-paper, audiobook). In order to support the students' learning and to promote their professional development, they are also asked to produce an individual or dialogic e-portfolio in which they document and reflect their learning.

For example, some students intended to compare to what extent international

students use mobile technologies for their own teaching practices. For this purpose, the researching student group conducted an online survey and put together the results on an online blog, enhanced by dialogic reflections (i.e. written posts, images, recordings). Another group of students was inclined to find out how international teachers and teacher educators evaluate the popular Kahoot© App (www.kahoot.com) and to what extent they use it in their own teaching practices. This group conducted (online) interviews, which they recorded, transcribed and analysed. Based on the data they collected they produced an ‘evidence-based’ online tutorial for future teachers who are interested in using Kahoot in their own classroom. For a closer look at these and other student projects take a look at our website www.propiceuropa.com.

According to Toom et al. (2008, 2) “[i]dentifying pedagogical elements and asking pedagogically meaningful questions in educational situations are among the most important skills a future teacher needs.” In particular, the idea of ‘asking pedagogically meaningful questions’ is something that we intend to promote in the context of the proPIC project. We try to do so by bringing together students from different European

institutions and by initiating a reflective dialogue among them, partly on online platforms such as Slack or Moodle, and partly during the study week when they meet each other face-to-face. In our experience, getting in touch with other international students as well as going abroad and looking at other educational systems is something which highly encourages the students to ask ‘pedagogical meaningful questions’ and think about their own contexts and practices. Thus, we foster cooperative and interactive research among students and teacher educators, as “[e]ssentially, through dialogue, professional development is mediated by language; new understandings emerge through conversations with other professionals, through experience and reflection on that experience.” (Mann & Walsh 2017, 12)

Conclusion

Integrating research orientation in such a transnational setting, the partners of this ERASMUS+ project intend to empower future language teachers to actively engage in lifelong learning processes and to cooperatively establish a culture of (professional) self-reflection, (technical) innovation and inter-/transculturality in language teacher education. By bringing



together researchers and practitioners on the teacher educator level, we aim at bridging the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, we intend to ‘practice what we preach’ by conducting research to improve our own practices in collaboration with our students. On the student level we foster the understanding of how and why to apply certain research methods and approaches to

one’s own practice and professional development. With our project we emphasise the importance of supporting individual and CPD, facilitate the use of mobile technology, and initiate transnational collaboration and reflective practices among professionals in the field of language teacher education.

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Developing a model of Contextualised Specialist Coaching to support school improvement

A Research Working Paper by Rachel Lofthouse and Anthea Rose

Introduction to the SSIF project

A recent policy adopted by the Department for Education (DfE) in England has been the use of Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) grants which have promoted the targeted use of evidence-based practice in areas of defined need. The DfE state that

The SSIF fund targeted resources at the schools most in need to improve school performance and pupil attainment, to help them use their resources most effectively and to deliver more good school places. The fund supported a broad range of school improvement activities including, leadership, governance, teaching methods and approaches and financial health and efficiency. The fund supported medium- to long-term sustainable activities across groups of schools with a preference towards support provided by schools, for schools. (DfE, updated 2019)

The SSIF funding stream is now closed.

This working paper focuses on one SSIF project led by the Swaledale Teaching Alliance in North Yorkshire to introduce metacognition into mathematics in primary schools. 'Metacognition and self-regulation' is a relatively common term in the current

teaching and learning discourse and has been adopted by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Previously these approaches might have been described as 'teaching thinking skills'. The inclusion of 'teaching' emphasises an active instructional and facilitative role of the teacher. The Swaledale SSIF project funding bid was based on the high relative position of 'metacognition and self-regulation' as one of the effective teaching strategies in the EEF Teachers' Toolkit.

The SSIF project, in which specifically employed lead practitioners took coaching approach allowing them to focus on the importance of the role of the teachers, ran for five terms from September 2017 to April 2019. Ten primary schools in North Yorkshire participated in the project, the schools were characterised by a predominance of Service Children (having at least one parent serving in the Armed Forces). KS2 data shows that outcomes for pupils at these schools has been below the national average for some years. Attainment and progress in maths has been particularly weak. One of the main issues with



these pupils is their mobility. Pupils do not often stay in one school for very long and enter or leave school at times other than usual, often at short notice as whole regiments are moved.

Evaluation approach

The aim of the SSIF project was to empower pupils to understand their own learning and to develop skills to enable them to take more responsibility for their own progress. An independent evaluation of this project was conducted by Rachel Lofthouse and Anthea Rose of CollectivED, a research and practice Centre in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University. The evaluation was focused on the following critical aspects of school improvement:

- how the school improvement project was designed,
- how the school improvement practices were carried out,
- what the evidence is of the potential legacy of this school improvement project.

This paper focuses on the coaching dimension of the evaluation. The underlying approach to the evaluation was that the SSIF project was

based on a ‘theory of change’ held by the Teaching School Alliance and individualised in each school. In the broadest terms, the project’s theory of change was that effective development of teachers’ practices to create more metacognitive learning and support greater self-regulation by pupils in maths could enhance the achievement and progress of pupils and help them to overcome some of the challenges associated with high mobility between schools. This proposition had particular relevance for the children from service families, but the project leaders were always clear that the pedagogic approaches being used would not be specifically targeted towards these children, but that the project was about whole school improvement, albeit starting from a very specific subject and pedagogic base. The fact that the project had this implicit theory of change meant that it was appropriate to use a methodology aligned with this.

As such, the overarching method is an evaluation of the theories of change underpinning the project design and implementation, which was addressed both holistically and at individual school level. Laing and Todd (2015) state that ‘a theory of change articulates explicitly how a project or initiative is intended to achieve outcomes through actions, while taking into account its



context' (p.3). This method allowed an evaluation of the way that the SSIF project was implemented, and also a recognition that the context, (e.g. policy, school and community contexts), are integral to the degree of success achieving change. This paper focused on what the evaluation approach revealed about the coaching model which evolved as the work of the Lead Practitioners developed.

The Role of Lead Practitioners

The project had a staffing infrastructure which drew together the Teaching School Alliance, the staff appointed to the project and senior leaders and teachers in each school:

- The Strategic Lead who was the Head of the Alliance who held the funding.
- The Project Manager who was responsible for the day-day running of the project.
- The Headteachers at each of the ten participating schools who ensured that the project was delivered in their school and sat on the Project Board that oversaw the project and met regularly.
- *The Lead Practitioners (LPs). These were three experienced teachers Hannah Munro, Claire Barnes and Kirsty Davies who were specifically appointed to deliver*

the project in schools and to work with a designated teacher in each.

- The Lead Teachers (LTs) who were the designated teachers appointed by the school to work with the LPs.

The three Lead Practitioners each worked part-time making up the equivalent of two full-time posts (which the jobs were originally advertised as). They were in post from January 2018 until Easter 2019, starting in the second term of the funded project. Their work over each term can be summarised as follows:

Term 2 (Jan-April 2018): LPs undertook training to understand metacognition before going into schools to work with their designated LTs after February half term for one day a week. Delivery was focused on mathematics. LTs set up termly network meetings.

Term 3 (May-July 2018): LPs continued to work with their LT one day a week except for the last week of every half term when they had time out of school to come together for a time of sharing, reflection, continued professional development (CPD) and an opportunity to organise the next half terms delivery. LPs introduced cluster observations and ran network meetings.



Term 4 (Sept-Dec 2018): LPs continued to work with the LT and began the process of helping them roll out the metacognitive approach to other teachers in their school. The LPs ran network meetings and a new school year re-launch conference.

Term 5 (Jan-April 2019): LPs continued to work with their LT one day a week and roll out the initiative through staff training. Final round of cluster observations and network meeting. End of project conference.

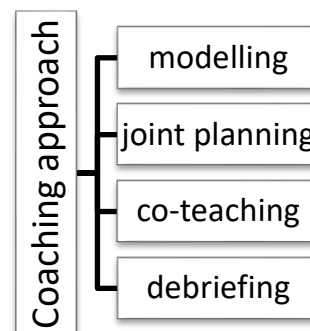
Specialised Contextualised Coaching

This Lead Practitioners in the SSIF project adopted a model of coaching which might best be described as **contextualised specialist coaching**. As the LPs were experienced teachers, but not themselves experts in metacognition at the start of their employment, the pedagogic approaches they developed were designed with the needs of the project's teachers and pupils in mind. Their approach was also contextualised by the individual challenges in each school, the different year groups in focus, the different levels of experience and the different roles of the LTs they were working with. To support this, the LPs continually gathered data, reflected on how and where the project was

going and adapted their delivery model and pedagogical approach accordingly. Consequently, the coaching approach included modelling, joint planning and co-teaching and debriefing with the LTs. The LPs offered specialist insight of metacognition and also of primary teaching and learning more generally. This was not a 'clean coaching' model, but had some elements of mentoring, guidance and feedback integral to it in it, aligning it with the 'specialist coaching' approach defined by CUREE (2005).

The contextualised specialist coaching had 4 main components (figure 1).

Figure 1. The core components of the Swaledale coaching model



Teacher coaching has a strong history and evidence base in the practice of enhancing metacognitive teaching. For example, in the Newcastle University Schools-based Research Consortium Teaching Thinking Skills project funded by the Teacher Development Agency



in the late 1990s and early 2000s coaching was embedded alongside other forms of teacher CPD (Lofthouse, 2018). The coaching in that project was influenced by the work of Costa and Garmstorm (2002), and also drew on the Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education (CASE) approach to supporting teachers to develop metacognitive practices. Models of coaching have also been adopted in other SSIF projects, as illustrated by Ashley and North Star TSA (2018) in their CollectivED paper. Like many uses of coaching in education, the Swaledale SSIF project aimed to 'close a gap' in attainment and contribute to improving school performance.

Making sense of the impacts

Although the coaching undertaken in this project may not have the same definition as other forms, it corresponds with research by Lofthouse (2019) that demonstrates the significance of building good working relationships and developing productive dialogue in the coaching, and the structures and protocols that support that. Coaching is suited to helping individuals dealing with authentic challenges, professional interests and dilemmas experienced in complex educational settings, which even the smallest primary schools are. This coaching approach,

which evolved over the duration of the project was valued by the lead teachers who the Lead Practitioners worked with, with one LT stating that

Usually for the training sessions, you get half a day after the Christmas or summer holiday, whereas with this you get continued support. Other training sessions are an hour here and an hour there and there is no one afterwards to help you or check on you or to discuss it with. The difference between this project and anything else we've done in the past, is the support.

The Lead Teachers also liked the fact that the project was tailored to meet the needs of the individual schools, with one LT commenting 'often it's a one model fits all' and that does not work. The LTs reported from early on that the LPs had been very supportive and committed to the project.

The relationship between LTs and LPs was extremely positive. The LTs felt part of the project and that the LPs valued their input; they did not feel that the project was being done unto them, but rather with them, in full partnership.

It's certainly been a positive experience having the Lead Practitioners there to support us through it. We know that the project is really



good and we've done the research but having been left to our own devices to push it thought would have been quite a challenge. It probably wouldn't have been as effective. Having other people on it and having someone to work with you once a week I think has been really helpful.

I like that the Lead Practitioners have just got involved in the lesson and picking out points that we can do and it's something I've been more conscious about doing.

What's been nice for me is having a professional conversation. I know that in school, we like that but we don't have time anymore [...] a proper professional conversation with somebody who actually knows what they are talking about and can actually say: "well I don't know that, but I'll find out for you or I'll look into that". When we started this process I had no idea what it was about - but I've never felt de-skilled. I've been through many processes in my teaching career that I have felt de-skilled by things and this has not been one of them.

As a result the LTs felt that being part of the project had made them more reflective practitioners. It has also changed how they approach and deliver lessons and that as a result their teaching for metacognition has improved over time. By the end of the

project, some reported having a 'very different questioning technique' in the classroom and that the questions they asked the children were now very different to before. They also now give their children a lot more opportunities to have 'purposeful talk' in the classroom.

An interesting aspect of the project was the expansion of a supportive professional network creating new ways in which the lead teachers in the ten schools began to work collectively. This involved network meetings through which the teachers were to visit each other in project schools and see good practice during cluster observations; something they, as a classroom teacher, do not often get the opportunity to do. The LTs valued this opportunity which provided them with new ideas of how they might deliver metacognition. They found these particularly helpful, stating that,

It's actually quite nice to get out there and see what everybody else is doing and magpie ideas.

Being observed was really good because it reinforced the fact that I was doing it right.

Both the LPs and the LTs themselves reported a growth in LT confidence as a result of being involved in the project. An example of this



was given by one of the LPs who told how one of her LTs had held a leadership role several years ago. However, she disliked the role so much that she went back to being a classroom teacher. Her linked LP commented, 'it is through this project that she told me her confidence is back and she feels that she could actually go back to leadership.' Given that one of the original Key Performance Targets (KPIs) for LPs was around developing leaders, they believe the project has been successful in achieving this.

The coaching approach adopted here corresponds with the suggestion that coaching is a valuable means to deploy the expertise of experienced professionals (the LPs) to support teachers and contribute to school improvement. Alongside the specific coaching itself a coaching culture (Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh, 2018) has begun to emerge within the project. This was achieved through the network meetings of LTs where the LPs offered a networking space to share the practices that were being developed and trialled across the schools. With the different year groups being included as focus classes this led to a broad consideration of teaching and learning and the impacts of

metacognition and self-regulation. Despite some initial nervousness from some teachers, the cluster observations provided a further means by which teachers became more engaged, more open to new ideas and more confident about sharing and reviewing their own and each other's teaching practices. Whether this emerging coaching culture can be embedded in the schools will depend on how successfully they can 'transfer what is powerful about one-to-one coaching conversations into everyday culture of [the] schools' (Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh, 2018, p. 110).

When they started planning their work for the SSIF project the Hannah, Claire and Kirsty, the Lead Practitioners adopted the motto of 'Think big, Start small'. This was an important underpinning philosophy for the coaching; emphasising that embedding new pedagogic approaches takes time. One LP commented: 'for [the Lead Teachers], they will go into leadership roles and think, change does not happen overnight. They are going to have that mind-set and that's a fantastic place to be in moving forward and moving schools forward.'



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‘Inside-Out’ coaching – how a new understanding of the mind re-framed our vision of Well-being

A practice insight working paper by Laura Anthony

Over the past three years we have undertaken a journey, the outcomes of which we could not have foreseen or even guessed at, but which have changed forever how we experience the concept of well-being and good mental health in our school.

As a high achieving all-girls academy with a co-ed sixth form, five years ago we established a GOAL orientated coaching model to facilitate students and colleagues in identifying smart targets to move themselves forward. A key determinant of its success has been the active buy-in and engagement of our Senior Leadership team who have allowed us to grow it organically. Currently we have a team of twenty trained Coaches, (both teaching and non-teaching staff) and anyone within our school community can self-refer themselves.

This is where we are today with invaluable work being undertaken by our coaching team, but it has been the addition of an understanding that we call ‘Inside-Out’ coaching, (for it is what it says on the tin), that over the past three years has proven truly transformational. It is based on the premise that we can only experience life via our

thinking and because we live in thought all of the time, we are therefore constantly *living in the feeling of our thinking*, (Banks, 1998; Pransky, 2003; Neill, 2013; Kelley, 2016). Gleason (2017:21) states that ‘... Thought is behind all our experience. Without thought we *cannot have an experience*’. This is not a new concept but holds parity with the philosophical outlook exemplified by a number of the stoics, for example Hammond (2006:2.15) cites Marcus Aurelius advising that ‘All is as thinking makes it so’. Moreover, thought is seen as transitory, an illusion that has no substance beyond the capacity and energy we choose to give it to keep it alive. It is not a permanent truth. Put simply, everyone has within them the capacity for health, well-being, wisdom and common-sense and it is only our thinking that at times can obscure the view and prevent us from seeing this. Allowing the mind to settle allows the innate gift of *natural thought* to come through. Kelley (2016:66) states that this is ‘... the intelligent, responsive, effortless way that the human mind is designed to think’.

It is useful to set our journey within the wider context that over the past two decades has seen an increasing deterioration in well-being

and mental health that is reflected world-wide. The World Health Organisation (2018:1), view improving mental health as an integral part of their Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 (2018:1), and furthermore The Mental Health Foundation (2017:9) state that by then, if unaddressed, ‘... depression will be the leading cause of the disease burden globally’. Nationally, the regularity of initiatives and government papers, (from both the departments of Education and Health), from the release in 2015 of ‘Future in Mind’, through to the current Green Paper (2017) all illustrate our experiences on the ground in our schools and community’s. There can be no denying that we are experiencing noticeably higher levels of stress and anxiety across the board that are further impacted for our young people as external agencies draw away by raising their entry criteria and delayed access times.

As with all schools it has become imperative that we take seriously the idea of prevention, of intervening to try and stop a need escalating. It was a happy coincidence that whilst I was immersed in researching and building our knowledge base, unbeknown to me one of our young coaches was equally submerged in deepening his own learning of the ‘Inside-Out’ understanding with practitioners in the States. Since the 1970’s

it’s impact there has been building in the fields of psychiatry, (Kelly, 2016), social improvement in inner-city communities, (Pransky, 2011; Marshall, 2003), education, (The SPARK Initiative, 2018) to name just a few.

My own interest in how resilience relates to well-being - whether it can be determined as innate, or instead, is a learned behaviour, took into account the wide field of research undertaken over the past 50 years or so. Whilst divided opinions still exist, there is a general consensus now that a self-righting ability is already innate within us all, the ‘ordinary magic’ that Masten (2015:8) so eloquently refers to. That resilience can be augmented through recognised ‘protective factors’, such as a student having an adult with whom they form a trusting and non-judgemental relationship is also accepted, and in essence prevention theory suggests that there exist multiple pathways to accessing resilience, and that whilst it is innate, it can also be enhanced and taught.

Whilst this knowledge filled me with hope, my studies around the concept of well-being had alerted me to a factor that married completely to the work that we were undertaking with this new understanding. I kept bumping up against a belief posited by a



disparate number of people that well-being and happiness are part of our essential nature, as Neill (2013:59) states, our '... original grace'. Seligman (2012:40) whose role leading the Positive Psychology movement over many years, similarly suggests that well-being is the '...positive strength of 'seeing into the soul' nurturing it and letting it be the buffer against the ills that will ensue'. In the maelstrom of our current focus on the scarcity of well-being and pathology around mental health, this posed a huge question – could our young people quieten enough to begin to re-connect with their own inner wisdom, common-sense, (or whatever we choose to call it?). Our experience has been that most of our students, as they begin to truly see for themselves that their thinking creates their reality - when this begins to crack, they experience insights that bring deep and permanent shifts in their understanding. From this point on they are only ever one thought away from everything changing. This is the knockout – nothing in their outside world has to change for *everything* to change.

This is an understanding, there are no strategies to learn and our interaction with our students and staff is completely discussion based - we are just pointing towards experiences from a 'have you ever

noticed...'.point of view. It is a two-way street, with 'new' constantly popping up. Our very first cohort, working with a core group of fifteen Year 11 students, began to show us it's huge potential. In ten years in my role of supporting this year group through their GCSE's, for the very first time the exams team and I did not have to discuss making any special arrangements for anxious students. Nobody crashed out and some students that had been involved exceeded their target grades. In fact, the general calmness within that whole year group as we headed up to and through the exams was palpable, and we began to suspect that this was due to our group sharing with their friends what they were seeing differently in their own lives. We experienced students telling us that family relationships were so much easier, anxiety and stress levels had lessened, and that they were in the words of many of them, 'feeling lighter'. An Action Research study I undertook as part of a Masters last year added further depth to our evaluations. Whilst this data is hugely limited, it offers an interesting insight into the journeys students and staff have undergone. The past three years have given us such a myriad of transformational examples, (and I don't use the word lightly), that this work forms the core intervention in our main ADP focus this year on 'Creating a



mentally healthy community for students and staff’.

We are continuing to build our shared work in partnership with a not-for-profit Community interest company Mental Well-being in Schools (www.mentalwellbeinginschools.org).

As their home school we work closely together to deliver this understanding to other local schools, some within our local Teaching School Alliances and also our wider community, for example through parental workshops.

There is an interesting aside as to how ‘mental health’ itself is currently being perceived. Professor Peter Kinderman, (2014), the outgoing President of the British Psychological Society last year, issued in the summer of 2018 a new manifesto. Rejecting the current ‘disease model’ which views emotional distress as a symptom of a

biological illness, instead he along with other eminent colleagues is suggesting that mental health problems are fundamentally social and psychological issues and that instead of labelling people we should be talking to them about their problems. It goes without saying that this is being forcefully rebuffed by some professionals in the field and the pharmaceutical companies, (but that is another paper!).

Re-thinking this on such a seismic scale gives hope for the future. I am not suggesting for one moment that our work is a panacea to an amazing life – we are human, we have our ups and our downs but understanding that thought is transitory means that we don’t get stuck. As Vernon (2008:6) argues, it is ‘... about the search for the *good in life*’ and slowly we are moving in the right direction.

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Peer coaching as a CollectivPE (in writing for an academic purpose)

A practice insight working paper

by Steven Tones, Luke Jones and Gethin Foulkes

Background

In 'Paper Lion' George Plimpton (a rookie Quarterback about to play his first senior Football game) is in a mentoring conversation with Detroit Lion Quarterbacks Earl Morrall and Milton Plum - *"tomorrow night" he said to me "let's say you run the pass play ninety-three – once your back in the pocket here's what you should see: you see your short receiver, the number three man, and you see how he is going, then you pick up the longman to see if the defensive safety's got him covered, then back to the three man, and you go to him – unless the line backers are in his zone, in which case you throw out into the right flat to your swing man, the safety valve – then you have the man going down from the eight hole ten yards to the left and button hooking, so that actually you have four possible receivers in an arc of 180 degrees, and since you've only got two maybe three, seconds to pick one of those people out you can see how helpful a wide angle of vision can be"..."the angle seems to widen with experience" Plum said "when you start out*

and don't know where to look, it's as thin as a flash light beam"(p203).

When we started our CollectivPE group it was with the intention of writing about mentoring and coaching (in PE) for publication – but also and perhaps equally, to inform our current mentor training programme in ITE. I think we recognised the complexity in George Plimpton's mind and the *thin flash light beam!* - where do you start - what do you write - how do you structure it – how do you know it is any good – will anyone else be interested in what you write – and ultimately will it be valuable in moving the conversation forward.

Our process of peer coaching

We seemed to be drawn to the pedagogy of peer coaching as it provided a context and framework which suited our emerging relationship. There was a strong desire to work collaboratively in order to expand and enhance our knowledge of mentoring and coaching in ITE/PE. We had all practiced



mentoring and to an extent coaching. In many ways our perceptions were that we were attempting to draw on these experiences and add them to the collective pot.

In most instances we have tried to diary our writing sessions – well actually ‘thinking sessions’ – the writing happens ‘in between’. Often it involved coffee, tea (for Gethin) and biscuits if someone has been shopping - big bits of paper - colored pens – a lot of storytelling (most of it related to mentoring!) - note making – often frowns – but, importantly the co-construction of ideas that provided a frame and shape for the the research.

We appeared to have hit on a process that is quite dynamic (in terms of getting things done) and very social – and often our comments following the ‘thinking sessions’ were about feeling energized (even when receiving a review that was less than favorable!). We also appear to have developed a relationship that gave us some safety in terms of being able to discuss ideas and perhaps say things to each other that may otherwise be quite difficult. We think our approach to peer coaching has become almost Vygotskism in nature i.e. taking turns in becoming the able other but without the hierarchy. There was a lovely phrase shared

recently at the @CollectiED ‘*Mentoring and Coaching in Education Research Network*’ day by @jeaniedeens, and that was to have ‘humanity in our coaching conversations’ and perhaps for us, we are beginning to recognise that this plays an important part in our peer coaching practice.

But one thing we haven’t done so much is actually walk/run and talk and we need to rethink this!

The writing and the papers!

In the first paper of our CollectivPE we wrote about the process of ‘**Mentoring associate teachers in initial teacher education: the value of dialogic feedback**’. This was a telling piece of research for us in that we relearning about the process of writing for journal publication – but also about taking a number of ideas forward into our work on mentor training.

Firstly, we found that mentors are finding different ways to provide feedback to ATs, including

- Formal written feedback (using a structured template).
- Informal written feedback (using annotation on lesson plans etc.



- Formal directed learning conversations (using a coaching script).
- Informal learning conversations occurring outside the formal mentoring space.
- Technology – in the form of lesson study or micro teaching.

Secondly, that mentor feedback varied across the period of school based learning (SBL).

Earlier in SBL, feedback was reported by mentors as being more frequent, structured and specifically focused on prompts, providing advice and strategies – particularly in relation to areas such as managing pupil behaviour. Later in SBL, mentors reported the use of feedback as being more critically focused, challenging and open ended.

Thirdly, although formal structured mentoring time was valued, mentors commented on the use of more informal opportunities for feedback, which were often shorter in duration but occurring almost as ‘drip feed’ commentary – almost as a way of keeping ATs on track. In triangulation, ATs reinforced the value and impact of informal feedback on their learning and this has led us to explore the starting point for the use of informal dialogue and particularly the coaching

questions that might begin to foster ATs strategic thinking.

Later, and in a follow up paper we explored more broadly the ‘**Learning Conversations between Mentors and Associate Teachers**’. This paper offered the opportunity to explore and gain more insight into both formal and informal learning conversations that are held between PE subject mentors and PE Associate Teachers.

In the first instance, we learnt that conversations between mentor and AT about learning to teach are almost ubiquitous in that they happen in many different locations in school and at many different times of the day. Whilst more formal conversations appear to have a regular structure and time frame around them, there are many informal learning conversations which we are beginning to describe as providing a ‘bridge’ (between the formal), and which are taking place beyond the regular teaching day. Again, interesting from several perspectives -

- It may be that it reflects the very busy nature of mentoring and as one AT reports “*you know how busy your mentor’s time is, so you talk whenever it’s convenient and you’ve got a quiet five minutes together*” (AT/PE1)



- It pulls at the fact that learning conversations can be valuable no matter how formal or informal – as learning is always challenging, complex and often messy.
- From the point of training mentors, we need to consider the importance of informal, often ‘bespoke’ nature of some learning conversations and the importance we perhaps need to attach to them – and perhaps the challenge for us is to consider how to filter the bespoke approaches into mentor awareness and training opportunities?
- It is equally valuable to note that research is pulling at the idea that teachers would value more time for informal talk!

Secondly, we found the learning conversations were variable in terms of the nature of dialogue and the focus of the conversations. Both, one way and two conversations were perceived by ATs to have a value – with one way conversations tending to dominate the early relationship exchanges and two way learning conversations coming to the fore as relationships develop and bond. We found that all conversations focused on either the cognitive or affective domains, with

some (later in the programme) reflecting both - interesting in that -

- Perhaps this begins to reflect the mentor-coach continuum with mentoring happening earlier in the training programme and coaching later? - Coaching in the sense of the strategic questioning and reflective thinking demands placed on ATs as they become more pedagogically savvy and can begin to synthesise both theory and practice.
- Senge (1990) indicates the most effective conversations occur in a sharing relationship and going forward we perhaps need to understand more about how such relationships are established and evolve i.e. as we know relationships do not exist in a vacuum.

Finally, there is something valuable happening in relation to ‘learning reciprocity’ (which is not surprising or new). We have several examples where mentors are learning ‘a new’ by adopting the ideas or practices of ATs who are taking the pedagogical practice from a previous school or University! to their next school based setting. Building on this and the other ideas, we are beginning to **‘Exploring Associate Teacher Learning networks in the**



context of ITE/PE' – this is still in draft – on big paper – with lots of colourful scribbles - and is very much still in the 'thinking about'

stage – but nevertheless, is giving us a further opportunity to extend our collective thinking, talking and writing.

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Thank you also to @jeaniedeens



Working Collaboratively to Support Mentor Development practice

A practice insight working paper by Lisa Murtagh

As a teacher educator, I have been involved in mentor training for many years across three different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and it has become increasingly evident that there is a key problem. Training for mentors typically centres around preparing the mentors for the ‘mechanics’ of the placement- sharing key documentation such as observation proformas, assessment grids, planning formats etc. There seems to be very little to no development for the mentoring process per se. Releasing mentors to attend training events, although costly for both schools and HEIs, is a significant opportunity that is frequently missed. This became particularly evident to me and my colleagues following the release of the national standards for school-based ITT (DfE, 2016).

A key recommendation from Sir Andrew Carter’s review of initial teacher training (ITT) was for a set of non-statutory standards to be developed. The aim of this was to help to bring greater coherence and consistency to the school-based mentoring arrangements for trainee teachers. In July 2016, the National

Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors were published and are divided into four separate areas (DfE, 2016):

- **Standard 1 - Personal qualities;** Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and empathising with the challenges a trainee faces.
- **Standard 2 – Teaching;** Support trainees to develop their teaching practice in order to set high expectations and to meet the needs of all pupils.
- **Standard 3 – Professionalism;** Induct the trainee into professional norms and values, helping them to understand the importance of the role and responsibilities of teachers in society.
- **Standard 4 – Self-development and working in partnership;** Continue to develop their own professional knowledge, skills and understanding and invest time in developing a good working relationship within relevant ITT partnerships



Whilst the standards are deemed to be non-statutory, the publication states that “Ofsted should have regard to the standards in their inspection of ITT providers” (DfE, 2016, p. 9). Ensuring our partners were familiar with the standards became an immediate priority. We devised ‘bookmarks’ of the standards for school-based mentors, made reference to them in placement handbooks and included reference to them in mentor training sessions. However, whilst we had ‘shared’ the standards with our school-based partners, we failed to actively engage with them and in discussions with colleagues, I became concerned that we were missing an opportunity to use them to support mentor development. My colleague Louisa Dawes and I raised concerns at our strategic partnership boards for our Primary and Secondary PGCE provision and invited school partners to meet with us to discuss mentor training and development and the introduction of the National Standards for school-based ITT.

A working party was established and this included university-based and school-based colleagues representing all aspects of our provision – Primary PGCE, Secondary PGCE, School Direct, Teach First and SCITT. This was

a particularly interesting aspect of the working party, as, speaking from my own perspective, opportunities to work across provision are rarely afforded. The working party met approximately every six weeks for over a year. The starting point for our discussion was centred round the national mentor standards for school-based ITT and it very quickly became evident, drawing on the diverse range of experiences within the group, that we felt that the reduction of mentors’ work to four standards in many respects, oversimplified the very complex and multi-faceted role of the mentor and could lead to instrumentalism in the mentoring process. We devised a short questionnaire that was distributed online to mentors in in England and this confirmed our concerns. The questionnaire responses, broadly speaking, noted that there was an appetite for mentoring standards to facilitate consistency of experience for trainee teachers, but that they should be used in a supportive, non-punitive capacity to secure high trainee outcomes and enhance the mentoring process for trainees and mentors alike.

In further seeking to understand mentoring practices, the working party turned to the literature in the field. A key piece of work



that sparked our discussions was that of Hudson, Skamp and Brooks (2005). Hudson et al conducted a review of the literature regarding effective mentoring practices and concluded that there are five key factors: personal attributes, system requirements, modelling, feedback and pedagogical knowledge.

Hudson, et al (2005) state that as learning takes place within the social context and in a profession that has a focus on social interaction, interpersonal skills are a basic requirement for effective performance as a teacher, and consequently the mentor's personal attributes are essential for mentoring. They, note that the mentor needs to be supportive and attentive to the mentee and must support the mentee to reflect on specific teaching practices whilst instilling positive attitudes and confidence.

System requirements, Hudson, Skamp and Brooks state, must emanate from a common source and provide a direction for teaching. At its simplest, the mentor needs to articulate the aims, policies, and curricula required by an education system (Hudson, 2010).

Mentors are defined in Hudson et al's work as

experts who model practice and research suggests that the skills for teaching are effectively learned through modelling whereby the mentor is seen as an expert able to model practice effectively (Hudson, 2002).

Constructive feedback in initial teacher training is perceived as a fundamental tool in the mentoring process (Hudson, Skamp and Brooks, 2005) and Hudson (2002, p. 33) notes that "effective mentors articulate expectations and provide advice to the mentee, they review lesson plans, observe the mentee teach, provide oral and written feedback, and further feedback on the mentee's evaluation of their teaching and the learning environment.

Finally, trainee teachers need mentors to have pedagogical knowledge to guide their practices, and Hudson et al note that specifically, mentors need to provide pedagogical and content knowledge. Notably, when discussing this particular factor, the working group felt that a distinction need to be made between 'pedagogical' and 'subject' knowledge. The argument presented by a member of the group was 'you may be a brilliant scientist, but that doesn't necessarily



mean you will be a great science teacher.’ This thought raised to consciousness the possibility of us developing a framework of our own that reflected the research in the field and made reference to the National Standards for school-based ITT Mentors.

However, as noted earlier, the group felt that any framework needed to avoid leading to instrumentalism in the mentoring process, and as such we adopted a transformative approach to the development of the framework drawing on the work of Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995). Cochran-Smith and Paris present a knowledge transformation model of mentoring. forged in constructivist approaches to learning. Such a model of mentoring can be seen to transform the learning of both mentee and mentor (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

We therefore devised a framework centred round the factors as noted by Hudson et al, but that also reflected our concerns in relation to pedagogical and subject knowledge. In addition, we were keen to consider the notion of mentoring as a community of practice, and therefore, considered how mentoring could be used to

assist individuals in developing their identities as mentors. The premise underpinning the framework is that it is tool for mentors and should not be used punitively, but rather to identify strengths and support recognition and development opportunities for mentors.

Having developed a framework of mentoring designed to transform the learning of both the mentor and mentee, we shared this with other ITT providers in the North West of England at a regional North West Network meeting. As a working party, we had gained valuable insights from the diverse experience of the group and saw the potential in broadening this out. In attendance at this meeting were representatives from a number of HEIs and SCITTs responsible for delivering ITT across the North West of England. We discussed the evolution of the framework document and sought feedback. What became very clear was that there was a desire for developing the document more widely across the North West. In light of this enthusiasm, our institution hosted a follow-up meeting which was well-attended by a diverse range of providers of ITT in the North West. We discussed the potential of the framework in terms of it providing consistency of mentoring practices irrespective of the



training provider and also its role in recognising the complex and multi-faceted nature of mentoring. We all agreed to seek feedback from our respective mentors regarding its use and development such that we could develop a North West Mentoring Framework. We are currently in the process of analysing the feedback from school partners across the ITT providers from this, but tentative findings are that mentors would welcome such a document, and perceive it to be of value in terms of raising the status of their role within their own settings, and allowing them to have transparency about expectations of the role of mentoring and its transformative capacity. There is further appetite to refine the document such that it is relevant to mentors beyond ITT and we see potential for its use with those mentoring NQTs in light of the recommendations of the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019). A key emerging finding of the document relates to mentor transformation. The framework acknowledges the potential for mentors to engage with a wider mentoring community to transform their own learning. This is an

exciting aspect of the development of the framework, and we are working together as a North West group of providers to further develop our collaborative approaches to mentor development beyond simply superficial mentor training.

Whilst this paper has reflected on the development of a mentor framework, I would like to conclude by noting the importance of collegiality. Despite the University of Manchester being geographically located in an area with a high concentration of ITT providers and inevitably therefore high levels of competition for recruiting trainees and securing placements for them, working collaboratively with other ITT providers has transcended the discourse of 'competition'. As a group of providers we have sought and are continuing to seek opportunities for working collaboratively and in doing so, take very seriously our collective responsibility for supporting the development of high quality mentors.



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The staffroom: the long forgotten CPD resource

A think piece working paper by Nimish Lad

Teaching, by definition, is a communicative profession, with teacher on a daily basis needing to get their ideas, thoughts and knowledge across in a variety of ways. It is therefore no surprise then that one of the most effective ways for teachers themselves to learn is also through discussion and dialogue. The place within school that this is most likely to happen is the staffroom. In the past, staffrooms where were talk turned quickly from what was on TV the night before, to the events occurring in the classroom today. Whenever a member of staff shared their experiences, organically CPD (or professional conversations) would begin to take place. Supportive colleagues would either offer suggestions for improvements if someone was struggling, or “magpie” an idea they thought was exceptional.

The staffroom is the start of all mentoring and coaching conversations. Staff find their mentor, someone to latch on to, very easily within a cohesive staffroom. They will always track down this person and ask for advice. Coaching will naturally take place too, with

advice being given from experienced staff; and if they don't know the answer there will be someone in the staffroom who will know where to find it!

Over the years, in some settings, this culture has eroded away. Some schools have staffrooms that every day, have a piece of tumbleweed rolling through, during every period and during every lunch or break; an abandoned resource in the school. Some schools have spotted this and turned it into a classroom! Others have a policy of the staffroom only being used for briefings and meetings, and it is never to be used at other points of the day (hopefully many of these do not exist!). Reasons for this are varied; it could be the workload of teachers is keeping them away from the staffroom, or that they are worried about the cliques that have formed.

This leads so to the clientele of the staffroom. Much like a David Attenborough documentary, the staffroom habitat can be watched closely and analysed. There are the



main stayers, the old guard, those that have seen it all. Then there's the support staff and some specific departments sitting together (rarely the "oddball" science department though, they always keep themselves in the mystery that is the prep room). Rarely do you see NQT's or early career teachers in the staffroom; could this be because many feel like they would get distracted and buckle under workload pressures if they tried to work away from the comfort and quiet of their own teaching rooms? Do they see the staffroom as a distraction rather than the phenomenal support mechanism that it can be?

The potential for the staffroom to be a hub of CPD is vast, but it is poorly managed then that potential is lost. So how do we claim it back?

Step one: Build it and they will come

1. Reinvigorate the staff room by encouraging all to come; bring and share food events are great for this, as well as cake Fridays or themed food days.
2. Hold mental health and well-being events in the staffroom e.g. meditation, yoga
3. Create spaces for staff to sit and talk, and also places for staff to work – consult on

whether these are to be segregated or kept together.

Step two: Encourage professional conversations

1. In the staffroom put up adverts for key local and national CPD events that staff may be interested in attending; show how these link to department and school wide development plans
2. Distribute articles of key ideas to do with topical pedagogy, or posters that display pedagogy in a clear, precise and easy to digest manner
3. Create a set of CPD discussion cards – a set of common scenarios or questions on cards that can be left out of tables that contain key CPD ideas; these can be picked up and shared to encourage professional discussion.
4. Invite staff from your MAT or feeder schools in to discuss what they are doing, encouraging staff with similar interests to buddy up and stay in touch.
5. Create a CPD lending library – drop one off to take one away
6. Put up a list of potential action research projects that leadership would be interesting in knowing about – see who takes the bait and encourage risk taking to take place!



While I am aware there are many effective and well used staffrooms up and down the country, hopefully some of these ideas listed are useful. The vast majority of these are low cost, but also high impact. Think creatively about the spaces that you have and provide staff with the best chance of having professional discussions. Let's make staffrooms great again!

This piece originated as a discussion piece for teaching staff on a personal blog:

<https://researchteacher.home.blog/2019/04/07/the-staffroom-the-long-forgotten-cpd-resource/>



Book review of Thompson, J. and Kosiorek, C. *A quick guide to video coaching (2017)*

By Steve Burton

Thompson and Kosiorek present a thoroughly practical and practitioner focused account of best practice in video coaching. However, the book begins with the assertion that many educationalists use coaching terminology interchangeably and arguably without full cognition; this recognition leads the authors to introduce coaching terminology carefully and clearly, before 'layering on' (a key theme in the text) the use of video technology. Setting video coaching so completely within the wider context of the coaching of teachers means that the book also touches upon wider concerns of teacher education and practice, such as reflexivity and presence.

This distinctly US-flavoured text (the authors are established and experienced educators from New York state) launches with a historical context of teacher education for K-12 practitioners (K-12 referring to education from Kindergarten to Year 12, which *roughly* equates to reception through to sixth form / Further Education (FE) in the UK educational system), arguing that preparation schemes for teaching must continue evolve in order to

maintain its currency in the profession.

Within that wider milieu of teacher education, this text recounts the process of combining the use of coaching approaches, and recorded video in order to improve teacher awareness and consequently, improve classroom pedagogy. The authors use a balance of their own project work and experience, together with other published sources to argue a case for the use of video coaching in order improve teaching, and add value to the continued development of teachers in the workplace.

This is a very accessible text, with a clear focus and a structure that develops a clear and cogent argument for developing a considered approach to coaching as the book progresses. The book makes regular links to culture, family life and sport, in order to illuminate connections between educational coaching and the ordinary lives of the readership. As both a coach and a novice chef (no, honestly), I was intrigued and entertained by the introduction of the secret sauce of video coaching, where the authors introduce six key ingredients required to both introduce and



sustain quality video coaching. This ethos of practicality shines through in this text. It continues as the authors take us through the characteristics of a good video coach, and good video coaching, where they provide advice and direction derived from their experiences, observations and reflections over several years of working with and as video coaches. Their claim is that good video coaches 'are not born,' but that there are key characteristics in personality and practice that assist the processes of good coaching and good video coaching.

The book is clearly aimed at educational practitioners who are interested in engaging in video coaching. However, I would argue that the readership for this text would – for the reasons that I have outlined above – be relevant to educators in any sector who are

developing their own coaching strategies – be that for their students or for their staff teams. As the authors suggest, '[w]hat's good for the goose is good for the gander' - good coaching benefits both the coach and the coached, and this text is clear in its conviction that the processes promoted within its pages will promote both better results for the coached, and more considered approaches to coaching for the coach.

In summary, this is a useful text which does exactly what its title proposes – it provides a practical, informed discussion on how teaching and educational practice can be enhanced through the use of video coaching, and the wider context of thoughtful, well considered approaches to the coaching of educators.



Enquiring into online teaching practice: using Coaching Dimensions as a metacognitive tool

A research working paper by Lynne Jones

Abstract

Coaching Dimensions (Lofthouse et al., 2010; Lofthouse & Hall, 2014) were developed to provide a language and mechanism for teachers to describe, analyse and improve the quality of their face-to-face coaching and mentoring conversations.

This paper summarises a self-study by an experienced classroom teacher but inexperienced online tutor who was unsure how well she was supporting teacher learning in a virtual environment. In the self-study the Coaching Dimensions framework was used to analyse tutor comments (n=213) on reflective blog posts written by participants on a teacher leadership programme (n=28).

Contextualisation of the framework to the virtual TLP environment was required before application. Though the online interactions were asynchronous and not face-to-face, five of the seven dimensions were explicitly evident and another was implicit in the data set. Dimensions of stimulus, scale and time were defined by the demands of the programme task. Typically, each comment featured more than one Interaction Function

and all seventeen aspects of the Interaction Function dimension were identified across the data set. Given the inexperience of the tutor-coach, this was surprising and encouraging. While the Co-creation (of learning) dimension is difficult to explicitly identify in coaching interactions, it was notable that instances of challenge-dissonance-defence interactions seems to imply that co-creation and learning did occur via these blog based interactions.

As such, the Coaching Dimensions framework is a useful metacognitive tool for exploring and improving coaching interactions in online as well as face-to-face situations.

Key words: Coaching Dimensions; supporting teacher learning online; coaching interactions; teacher metacognition

Setting the scene

Coaching Dimensions (Lofthouse et al., 2010; Lofthouse & Hall, 2014) were developed to provide a language and mechanism for teachers to describe, analyse and improve the quality of their coaching and mentoring conversations.



After eighteen years as a primary teacher, I took on the role of Associate Tutor on the Scottish College of Educational Leadership's (SCEL) Teacher Leadership Programme (TLP) in August 2017. The TLP is a blended, largely online, professional learning programme aimed at classroom practitioners. As a programme tutor, I regularly comment on the reflective posts on participants' individual blogs as they explore the concept of teacher leadership then prepare and undertake practitioner enquiry into a specific aspect of their teaching practice. The aim is for my comments and online presence to support and challenge participants.

The asynchronous nature of our online interactions meant I was especially wary of a lack of visual cues in our communications and of not knowing TLP participants well while at the same time, commenting on issues that touch on their professional values and identity. The distance factor of the virtual learning environment exacerbated the lack of self-confidence that I felt about my

comparative inexperience in supporting the learning of others in this context.

Coaching Dimensions were originally developed for use in face-to-face coaching interactions. While the blog-based interactions of the TLP is not face-to-face coaching conversations per se, I think it has a similar purpose in terms of supporting teacher learning and developing metacognitive thinking.

Coaching Dimensions

There are seven elements to the Coaching Dimensions (fig.1)

I was especially interested to know which interactive functions did and did not occur in my interactions and what that indicated about my approach to supporting teacher learning online. I was also curious about the extent to which other Coaching Dimensions featured.

For pragmatic reasons related to time, I opted to analyse my side of the interactions only.



INITIATION	STIMULUS	TONE	SCALE	TIME	INTERACTION FUNCTION	CO-CREATION
'recognising which participant was responsible for each new section or unit of analysis in the conversation ... This is significant in developing a sense of 'ownership' within the coaching conversation.'	'noting what evidence or stimulus was cited to support the conversation. The use of stimuli helps to root the conversation in practice evidence and can help to challenge assumptions and perceptions held by participants.'	'rated on a 5 point scale from very negative, through neutral to very positive. The tone adopted can suggest a hidden agenda, an emotional state or an learned behaviour.'	'rated from one to five in terms of the scope of the unit of discussion: 1 relating to critical moments, 2 to lesson episodes, 3 to the lesson as a whole, 4 to teaching and learning themes crossing lesson boundaries and 5 relating to wide school or societal issues. The use of scale determines the scope of the discussion, and where participants make links across the scales indicates enhanced reflection.'	'recognising four time references depending on whether the segment referred to the planning of the lesson (past), to the lesson events, to future specific lessons and, finally, to no specific time reference. An indication of relevant time-frames is indicative of the way participants seek links between experiences and planning, and suggest the potential of coaching for future practice.'	'noting that each 'turn' in the conversation serves a function, 17 sub-categories were identified; capturing elements of the purposes, processes and outcomes of interaction.' (See Table 2.)	'usually occurring over a number of 'turns' that are characteristically short and where they participants in the coaching or mentoring conversation are collaboratively developing an idea, building on the successive contributions of their partner ... This is the point at which reflection and learning through coaching are greatest.'

Figure 1: Coaching Dimensions (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014: 760-761)

	COACHING CONVERSATIONS (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014: 760-761)	IN THE CONTEXT OF TLP TUTOR COMMENTS
SCALE Determines the scope of the discussion, and where participants make links across the scales indicates enhanced reflection.	Rated from one to five in terms of the scope of the unit of discussion relating to: 1. critical moments 2. lesson episodes 3. the lesson as a whole 4. teaching and learning themes crossing lesson boundaries 5. wide school or societal issues	Rated from one to five in terms of the scope of the comment in relation to: 1. critical moments during career 2. task stimulus 3. participant's particular enquiry 4. concept of practitioner enquiry in general 5. relating to wide school or societal issues
TIME An indication of relevant time-frames is indicative of the way participants seek links between experiences and planning, and suggest the potential of coaching for future practice.	Four time references, coded in relation to: 1. the planning of the lesson (past) 2. the lesson events themselves 3. specific future lessons 4. no specific time reference	Four time references, coded in relation to: 1. past teaching/life experiences 2. current context and recent experiences 3. future hopes and intentions 4. no specific time reference

Table 1: The Scale and Time dimensions of Coaching Dimensions (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014: 760-761) applied to the context of the tutor comments on the reflective blogs by participants in the SCEL Teacher Leadership Programme.

Applying the framework

I used the Coaching Dimensions framework to analyse the tutor comments (n=213) I made to blog posts by the teachers in my tutor group (n=28) published between mid-September and the end of December 2018 for tasks (n=11) in the first three units of the Teacher Leadership Programme 2018-19.

- **Initiation** was less relevant in the context of the TLP, because I was always responding to the participant's blog post,

which in turn was always a response to a programme task.

- **Stimulus** related to the demands of the specific TLP task. Each unit of the programme had a theme i.e. Unit 1 Exploring, Unit 2 Reflecting, Unit 3 Enquiring. Within the unit, each task had an associated reading or film clip.

- **Tone** *'can suggest a hidden agenda, emotional state or a learned behaviour'* (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014: 760). My comments were predominantly neutral or positive in tone with no instances of negative or very negative tone.
- **Scale and time**, these dimensions were contextualised for the TLP (see Table 1) in order to be applied meaningfully. Identification of scale or time in a coaching interaction is classed as a feature of *'enhanced reflection'* (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014). Analysis showed that comments often comprised more than one reference to scale and/or time. Both of these dimensions were determined to differing degrees by the requirements of the particular programme task. Nearly all of my tutor comments included a future dimension through suggestions or questions to encourage teachers to further thinking, reading and/or action.
- **Co-construction** *'indicates cognitive development occurring within the conversation'* (ibid: 761) and is defined as *'collaboratively developing an idea, building on the successive contributions of their partner'* (ibid). Co-construction is rarely explicit in analysis of coaching interactions. As such, it was unsurprising that co-construction was not explicitly evident in the one-sided comment data either. That said, there were a few instances of dissonance and defence in the data which hinted at possible co-construction and learning.
- **Interaction Functions** comprise seventeen categories. Table 2 illustrates what the interaction functions look like in the context of the TLP.
- **Co-construction** *'indicates cognitive development occurring within the conversation'* (ibid: 761) and is defined as *'collaboratively developing an idea, building on the successive contributions of their partner'* (ibid). Co-construction is rarely explicit in analysis of coaching interactions. As such, it was unsurprising that co-construction was not explicitly evident in the one-sided comment data either. That said, there were a few instances of dissonance and defence in the data which hinted at possible co-construction and learning.



INTERACTION FUNCTION	EXPLANATION OF FUNCTION (indicate the purposes, processes and outcomes of interaction)	CONTEXTUALISATION OF FUNCTION (in relation to the comments on TLP participant blogs)
1. Question	Genuine question (excluding rhetorical questions).	Genuine – not rhetorical – question. May be a tactic to encourage continuity, suggestion.
2. Observation	Statement of what has been observed in practice.	Statement of what has been observed/noted by tutor on blog e.g. tutor picks up on points made in current or previous post by the same TLP participant or draws on themes from across the group/cohort.
3. Acceptance	Acknowledgement of situation, idea or conclusions.	Acknowledgement of situation, idea or conclusions.
4. Evaluation	Using evidence or experience to make a judgement.	Making a judgement about idea, situation, conclusion based on evidence or experience. Not based on beliefs and values unlike justification.
5. Summary	Brief overview of previously stated information.	Brief overview of previously stated information from task stimulus.
6. Challenge	Not accepting statement, idea or explanation.	Not accepting statement, idea or explanation in blog post. May be a response to justification/explanation/new idea/ defence /suggestion by participant. May or may not be followed up with justification/explanation/new idea/ defence /suggestion by tutor.
7. Suggestion	An idea or strategy for possible future use.	An idea or strategy for possible future use by participant – likely to be readings, previous TLP posters or fellow TLP participant blog, approach/refinement to data collection or analysis.
8. Continuity	A contribution that keeps the talking and thinking going.	A contribution that aims to keep the talking and thinking going. Can be a question. Blog author may or may not respond. 'What do you think?' 'I'm interested to hear your thoughts on X'.
9. Defence	Resistance of partner's statement or evidence, not accepting relevance or validity or existence of a potential issue/challenge.	Resistance of participant's statement or evidence, not accepting relevance or validity or existence of a potential issue/challenge. May be response to challenge. May follow challenge as a supporting argument to counter resistance of participant's statement/evidence?
10. Dissonance	An indication that an established idea or routine has been challenged by experience or in conversation.	Recognition or identification that an established idea or routine has been challenged by experience or in TLP activities/blog interaction(s). i.e. rethinking/change of mind/understanding following reading/watching task stimulus/critical incident or considering points made or questions asked in blog comments.
11. Clarification	Providing detail or substantiation.	Providing detail or substantiation aka evidence, corroboration. Not reasons. Most likely about TLP structures, expectations, timeline etc.
12. Description	Outline of classroom events or planning processes.	Outline of critical incidents or enquiry planning processes.
13. Explanation	Offering reasons for events and actions.	Offering reasons for events and actions.
14. Justification	Offering reasons that relate to personal decisions in planning or action.	Offering reasons that relate to personal decisions in planning or action. Based on beliefs and values so different to evidence/experience base of evaluation.
15. New Idea	Expressing what seems to be a new idea, either connecting things or resolving a dissonance.	Expressing what seems to be a new idea either connecting ideas/events discussed or resolving a dissonance. Articulating a new idea for that person.
16. Generalisation	Offering a more abstract or general idea that applies beyond the particular lesson context.	Offering a more abstract or general idea that applies beyond the particular TLP task.
17. Context	Description of the learning situation or environment.	Description of the learning (critical) incident or class/school/wider community/social environment.

Table 2: The interaction functions of Coaching Dimensions (Lofthouse & Hall, 2014:761) contextualised for the tutor comments on the reflective blogs by participants in the SCEL Teacher Leadership Programme.

INTERACTION FUNCTION	TLP PARTICIPANTS 1-28																											TOTAL	
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19	P20	P21	P22	P23	P24	P25	P26	P27		P28
Question	3		1	2	2	4	5	3	4	1		2	5	2	1	3	2	1	1	5	2	2	4		5	3	2	1	66
Observation	3	2	2	1	2	1		1	4	1	3	3		1	1			2	1	1	1	3		1	1	1		2	38
Acceptance	8	3	3	3	3	7	6	3	6	4	2		11	7	3	9	6	2	1	8	4	2	13	3	8	4	4	5	138
Evaluation	1						1				1	1		2	2		1	1			4	1	1		2		1	2	21
Summary	2					1		1									1												5
Challenge	1			1		1	1	1	1					2	1		1				2	1							13
Suggestion	7		3	1	1	3		2	2	2		3	6	3	2	1	3			6	4	3	2	2	1	2		3	62
Continuity	9		1	2	3	2	5	4	6	1	1	3	9	7	2	6	3	1	1	10	4	4	5	1	5	4	4	5	108
Defence						1								1															2
Dissonance									3											1									4
Clarification						1			1				2	2			1			1			3						11
Description						1		1		1						1													4
Explanation						1							1	1		1				1			2		2				9
Justification	2		1			1								1		3	2			1	3	1	1	1				2	19
New idea					1	2		1	1					1															6
Generalisation						1			1		1		2	1					1				1		2			1	11
Context													2								1								3
TOTAL	36	5	11	10	12	27	18	17	29	11	8	11	43	29	9	26	19	7	4	40	21	16	31	10	24	15	10	21	520

Table 3: Frequency of occurrence of the Interaction Functions in tutor comments on blogs by TLP participants, mid-September to end December 2018

Results and discussion

The frequency table (Table 3) is a record of the occurrences of the seventeen interaction functions in my tutor comments. Typically, comments comprised more than one interaction function and examples of each of the seventeen interaction functions were identified across the data set. This came as a surprise since Lofthouse & Hall (2014) found that an inexperienced coach tended to have a limited range of interaction function, while it was: *'the advanced coach who is an 'active cognitive partner' [who] will engage with more interaction functions during the course of the coaching dialogue than a novice whose main interaction function is predominantly questioning.'* (ibid: 766).

This diversity indicates a higher order of commenting than I had anticipated. However,

it is worth bearing in mind that my data set had a greater scope than Lofthouse & Hall's examples. Their beginner coach case study featured two cycles of coaching between two people over eight coaching conversations around two taught lessons. My main data set of the self-study comprised 213 comments, drawn from up to eleven interactions with each of 28 people over the course of two and a half months. Over a longer time, and with many more people involved, there was a greater probability of more of the functions occurring in the comments. Notably, the occurrences of some of the higher order functions - i.e. challenge, dissonance, defence - were relatively few in number (n=12, 4, 3 respectively).

Table 3 demonstrates the overall frequency and the distribution of the various interaction functions. The most common functions

(Acceptance n=138; Continuity n=108; Question n=66; Suggestion n=63) are well spread amongst the participants. Despite this, I was disappointed to see I seemed not to have demonstrated acceptance to participant 12 who had completed 4/11 tasks, nor had I made comments for continuity to participant 2 who had completed 3/11 tasks. In this way, might I have contributed to their relative lack of blog activity and engagement in the programme?

The majority of the remaining functions were distributed amongst the participants and occurred no more than twice. Three interrelated points arose.

1. Four participants received a diverse range of interaction functions. Participants 13 and 20 had eleven different functions. Participant 14 had twelve and participant 6 had thirteen.
2. Some of the less common functions appeared repeatedly in comments to a small number of participants. Justification occurred 3 times each for participants 16 and 21, dissonance occurred 3 times for participant 9 and evaluation occurred 4 times for participant 20.
3. At the same time as receiving four evaluative comments, ten other functions were identified in the tutor comments for participant 20.

One general interpretation, encapsulated in points 1 and 3 is that I was using function(s) that met the particular need of individuals at a given point in time.

Alternatively, point 2 may indicate that I judged a particular function to be one of the best approaches when communicating with a certain individual. This underlines a key challenge of asynchronous online learning at a distance – interacting with unfamiliar people and a lack of visual cues - which may encourage superficial and/or repetitive types of interaction (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015).

Tutor comments for participant 9 include four occasions of explicit recognition and/or resolution of dissonance and an additional occurrence of challenge across 9/11 tasks. Arguably, this indicates:

- Participant 9 continued with the programme because they recognised and appreciated a supportive yet challenging learning environment
- At least one episode of learning occurred for participant 9 through the blog based interactions.

Interaction functions with a low frequency and/or limited distribution may have become more frequent or widely occurring in later units of the TLP which was beyond the scope of my analysis on this occasion.



Wonderings and learnings

Previously, I lacked confidence about my efficacy in an unfamiliar teaching environment. Having read Lofthouse & Hall's (2014) article as part of my EdD studies, I wondered how I might be able to use Coaching Dimensions as a metacognitive tool to enquire into my approach to supporting teacher learning online.

As a result, I learned that I am able to communicate effectively about nuanced personal and professional matters with people I do not know well, in a virtual environment across distance time and space.

I have a strong coaching ethic towards supporting teacher learning online and evidence confirms that I do much to effectively support and challenge my beginner teacher-enquirers.

Coaching Dimensions proved to be a useful metacognitive tool, providing a language and mechanism for me to usefully enquire into how I support teacher learning online. I will continue to use this tool in future and recommend it colleagues coaching in face-to-face and online situations.

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Professional Development Programme for Advanced Practitioners: Some Reflections on the National Conference, March 29th 2019

By Joanne Miles

The National Conference on March 29th2019 was the culmination of a year of rich and varied activity on the Professional Development Programme for Advanced Practitioners, funded by the Education and Training Foundation and delivered by touchconsulting and CETTAcademy. Aiming to develop practitioners working in Advanced Practitioner-type roles across the education and training sector, participants have been able to access five programme strands:

- Communities of Practice (CoP)
- Collaborative Projects
- Developing Advanced Practitioners 3-day CPD programme
- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit
- National Advanced Practitioner Conference (March 2019)

More details on these strands on this link:<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/advanced-practitioners/>

An Outline of the Conference

The conference was a chance for APs to share, celebrate and critically reflect on the work in different settings this year and to focus on the question “How can APs drive quality improvements in their organizations, departments and teams?”

Conference attendees could attend workshops for an in-depth look at findings from several organizations and also participate in Action Learning Sets and a Thinking Environment Evaluation, for greater breadth and detailed reflection. Having played a small role in the programme, training up the Collaborative Project Leads and some AP Mentors and working in an advisory capacity, I was fascinated to see what had emerged from the work to date in different settings. I work widely in the sector to set up, train and mentor Advanced Practitioner/coaching teams and welcome this national focus on exploring and reflecting on the role in a coherent and structured way. I think AP/coaching teams have much to gain and learn from each other and that the



connections and opportunities to collaborate fostered in this ETF programme can lead to significant development in and of the role.

The atmosphere at the National Conference on March 29th 2019 was striking and energizing – there was an eagerness to share experiences, an enthusiasm and pride in the work and a strong feeling of connectedness. It felt like a group of people in relationships coming together as a bigger community with plenty of common topics to discuss. There was an openness to reflect on what has been helping the developmental work to go well and where there are challenges and pitfalls to tackle. The narratives were solution-focused, constructive and centred on enhancing practice and skills in future. There was a dominant thread in the narratives about respect for colleagues, about wanting to empower and enable teachers to develop their own practice for themselves and their learners. The APs talked a great deal about being supportive and facilitative and how that translated into their projects in context. I noted plenty of creative, hopeful thinking about what to do next and what they wanted to explore in their settings, to provide even richer opportunities for teachers to reflect and experiment. This was a group of APs who were clearly growing as developmental professionals and aspiring to go further and

do better in future. The motivation and dynamism displayed was an inspiring thing to experience.

What has helped Advanced Practitioners to have a positive impact in their context?

From the workshops I attended and the wider conversations during the day, I can say that Advanced Practitioners had identified many approaches and factors that helped them to have positive impact in their role. Recurring themes were:

The importance of leaders conceptualizing and promoting the work of coaches/APs as reflective and developmental in nature and not limited to deficit-focused approaches. This meant promoting opportunities for staff to work with APs/coaches on reflection, sharing practice and experimental innovation, so that the role was not restricted to just supporting teachers “requiring improvement.” Advanced Practitioners commented that a leader with a clear, thoughtful and positive vision for the role made a positive impact on how it embedded into the workplace. Advanced Practitioners without that leadership vision and support noted barriers around access to staff, integration of the role into wider



improvement work, access to space and time for meetings and CPD.

The underpinning ethos of respecting colleagues as professionals and seeking to engage with them about their practice in context, in empowering and enabling ways.

Part of this relates to fostering buy-in by engaging colleagues to select areas of focus for their development work and personalizing the support you give as an AP or coach.

People spoke about bespoke CPD sessions for clusters of teachers; supporting peer observation triangles; curating bespoke collections of research and resources; facilitating practitioner-led research into a specific area of teaching/learning.

Working creatively and flexibly with timetables to find spaces to work with staff – some APs had explored breakfast sessions or lunch time slots or twilight Teach Meets.

Others were using technology to curate and collate links, videos and resources for remote access. Some were using digital means for communication via webinar, podcasts and Skype/Zoom.

The importance of iterative, collaborative activity within the development work. The APs reinforced the messages emerging from wider CPD studies around the need for repeated, short opportunities to work on developmental areas over time. At Stanmore College, APs noted that having short slots for activity every fortnight fostered commitment to the work and led to good levels of take-up and momentum. The Westminster Kingsway coaches highlighted that teachers had most valued the opportunity of working collaboratively and sharing practice on a TLA area of their choice. They had also greatly valued exploring an action research process within their work over a period of time and its spaces for reflection. These AP experiences re-affirm my belief that one-off CPD is unlikely to generate engagement and developmental change in practice and that as developers, we need to put our attention and focus elsewhere, on more flexible, iterative and personalized models of professional learning.

Bishop Burton College and Riseholme College referenced the value of focusing on the positive in TLA development work. Their Open Door Teaching Week encouraged staff to visit other classrooms and look for interesting positive practices. They used Padlet as a repository for comments on the good things people had seen, which the people visited



were interested to receive as affirming feedback and food for thought. As they pointed out, the public nature of the comments on the Padlet also generated further discussions between colleagues and teams about practices and resources, creating further dialogue about TLA. This is a very perceptive way of fostering comfort and confidence with a more “open door” culture, I think, and can help to shift the negative association between classroom visits and being judged/assessed, which is often baggage from quality observation cycles.

The importance of creating safe experimental space for teachers emerged from many settings. East Riding of Yorkshire Council and City of York Council Adult Learning shared their work on Triangles of Excellence, in which APs worked with teachers to identify an agreed developmental need and then explore new practices through peer observation and experimentation with learners. They talked about the value of going out of your comfort zone, of growing your own skills and practices and how inspiring and re-invigorating this was. Cross service triangles created excitement and interest and the focus on ownership as opposed to accountability was well received and motivational.

Next steps with the AP development programme

At this stage, dissemination in event form was limited to attendance by the current AP group. While seeing the many positives of the event for reflection and sharing practice, it was unfortunate that funding wasn't available for a larger sector-facing event at this point in time. There were so many things other AP groups could have taken away as food for thought and exploration. Fortunately, key learning points from the work to date on the programme will be shared through reports/case studies later this year and I am sure each organization will be sharing their findings through networks as well. At the conference we also heard the exciting news that the Education and Training Foundation will be funding a second phase of the work, so watch the website for further details as they emerge. A sector-facing national conference is likely to be part of this work during early 2020 and I think this will be a valuable opportunity for other organizations to tap into this work.

Congratulations to all the APs, Project Leads, Mentors and the Project Teams at touchconsulting and CETTAcademy for such an exciting and creative programme. It will be very interesting to see how the current



projects evolve next year and how the APs develop further as they embed the work they have started in this phase of the programme.

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Finding our PGCEi spirit: Enacting spiritual leadership through coaching

A practice insight working paper by Nicholas McKie

I have a passion for coaching and the methodology around creating awareness of how people operate in order to ignite change, from both a personal and institutional perspective.

According to Whitmore (2002), coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. In the education arena there is a general agreement that coaching is a managed conversation between two people, that it aims to support the sustainable change to behaviours or ways of thinking, and that it focuses on learning and development (van Nieuwerburgh 2017:5 in Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh 2018).

When leading the establishment of a new International Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCEi) at a UK Russell Group university, implementing a coaching approach was an opportunity to engage with my passion. According to research from a 2017 joint study between the International Coach Federation (ICF) and The Human Capital Institute (HCI), coaching impacts many talents and organisational outcomes including improved team functioning, increased

employee engagement and increased productivity.

Alongside the above-mentioned coaching benefits, I was also looking for a deeper connection in terms of being part of the PGCEi programme development, engaging peoples' strengths and sense of purpose. With this in mind, it was perhaps more relevant to approach this project from a wider perspective. A coaching culture is one where coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where commitment to grow the organisation is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people in the organisation (Clutterbuck, 2018).

The concept of growing people alongside developing the PGCEi programme itself once again appealed to my coaching philosophy. In essence, transcending traditional performance management cycles, obligatory institutional training and sharing of resources to something more personalised and meaningful. This idea of value and purpose based work is very much aligned to the concept of Spiritual Leadership.



Spiritual leadership

Spiritual leadership as defined by Fry (2003), comprises of values, attitudes and behaviours necessary to intrinsically motivate yourself and others, which entails creating a vision wherein organisational members can experience meaning at work and in life and have a sense that they make a difference.

I had arrived at the deep level I was interested in and I was intrigued by individuals experiencing meaning and making a difference. What was the difference we were making by developing an international teacher-training programme? As programme leader had I reflected on the 'why', taking into account the needs of all stakeholders, whether students, trainee teachers, schools or PGCEi staff?

Hard performance indicators

Obvious answers read like a typical set of key performance indicators: driving student numbers to hit financial benchmarks, course approval ratings and eclipsing competitor offerings. The hard approach emphasizes continuous improvement by the use of statistical methods (Keleman 2003:100). In education these 'hard quality' types of measurement would include the publishing of results and league tables and also encapsulate the concept of 'performativity'.

'Performativity' signifies an obsession with targets, league tables, audit, accountability and similar mechanisms of (managerial) control (Dent and Whitehead, 2002). These hard procedural targets and prerequisites ensure that a programme can get approval, build credibility and have a sustained life span. As Sallis (2002:21) argues, 'Reputation is crucial to an institution's success'. In the initial developmental stage these can seem like the only targets on the horizon at times and whilst important, are not entirely emblematic of a coaching and spiritual philosophy.

Holistic overview

Further reflections centred on the value congruence between these hard targets, coaching and greater meaning. Was there an overarching holistic narrative to be articulated? I found it beneficial to draft initial mission statements through the lens of the different PGCEi stakeholders to further clarify overarching purpose.

***Children** Helping educate children worldwide, providing opportunities for children to further themselves and realise their potential.*

***Trainee teachers** Offering trainee teachers a robust and reflective driven programme that enables them to impact children's' education internationally, grow as professionals and as people.*



International schools *Supporting international schools professional development by offering teacher-mentoring training with the aim of further supporting both our trainees and mentors.*

PGCEi staff *To establish a high trust culture whereby staff are fully engaged through their areas of expertise with a sense of support, membership and belonging.*

Challenges in enacting spiritual leadership

Vision

Getting a vision for the PGCEi course that also aligns with the wider institutional aims of all programme stakeholders. The PGCEi is consistently connected with a plurality of stakeholders university wide as well as educational institutions across four continents. Aligning with all of these potentially competing units whilst also enshrining a coherent programme vision that allows for meaning can be hard to navigate and cement.

Resource

Whilst enacting spiritual leadership through coaching methodology, there potentially needs to be time and resource to allow people to align with their own purpose, meaning and development. A positive

example has been a colleague using their role in the PGCEi to feed into their Master's work. Scholarly leave is available to allow this member of staff to pursue their work outside of the institution, creating more overarching synergy. Whilst a perk in higher education, offering scholarly leave is not standard practice in schools however.

Performativity Culture

A performativity culture, where hard quality measurements are consistently valued over the softer more transformational approaches can have an impact on the enactment of spiritual leadership and coaching. Put simply, when culture works against you, it is almost impossible to get anything done (Deal and Kennedy 1983:4, in Stoll and Fink 1995:80).

Synergising spiritual leadership and coaching

I would like to offer a framework based on the International Coach Federation (ICF) core competencies for synergising coaching with spiritual leadership in the context of the PGCEi programme development.

- Setting the foundation:

Establishing meeting and training procedures and setting the culture for the way things are done.



Spending time with individuals to gain an understanding of their purpose and direction both at work and beyond in order to create synergy and develop a shared vision. Rather than a formal process, or conceivably as well as formal processes, vision can be created by an on-going dialogue, which nudges understanding towards greater congruence (Lumby 2002:89, in Bush and Bell 2002).

- **Co-creating the relationship:**

Taking time outside of formal meetings to engage with colleagues, establishing trust, intimacy and a sense of belonging. Continue to craft opportunities to more fully understand people's purpose and to align accordingly.

- **Communicating effectively:**

Active listening and powerful questioning in meetings and all interactions to ignite conversations, set direction and enhance relationships.

'Managing up' to ensure senior leaders are informed of developments and remain supportive.

- **Facilitating learning and results:**

Creating awareness of operation across all aspects of programme development, designing actions and managing accountability.

Transferring awareness, skills and knowledge into wider life to align greater meaning.

Final thoughts

To more fully embrace the idea of enacting spiritual leadership through coaching necessitates a paradigm shift to a different way of operating. Maybe this requires a particular emphasis on applying soft approaches to management and performance indicators? As K. Legge, (2005:105, in Whitehead 2012), explains, a 'developmental humanism' which treats the employee as a valued asset, proactive rather than passive, engaged not distant, worthy of trust and commitment. Put another way, a 'Stakeholder' perspective that seeks to more closely align the individual with the organisational mission. This approach recognises that people are thinking, dynamic and interactive beings, not just a static resource waiting to be used (Martin and Fellenz, 2010, in Whitehead 2012). The key issue for institutions moving forward could then be to further align personal and organisational goals. Once employees have been encouraged to pay attention to their progress at work, the organisation must be able to respond to their medium and long-term aspirations (Bratton and Gold 2007:290).

To encapsulate the above, maybe the purpose of the PGCEi course is to simply provide a



portal through which to discover and engage people's spirit, whether trainee teacher, school mentors or university staff. As Morris (2018) posits: 'the project of critical pedagogy,

then, is not simply the project of improving education, or of learning, but rather the project of becoming more fully human'.

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Why measuring coaching effectiveness in terms of wellbeing takes practice into the '3rd generation' of coaching

A think piece working paper by Charmaine Roche

Since 2016 I have led several workshops for education professionals at WomenEd events that have attracted a growing and enthusiastic audience. The workshops, called Flourishing in Life and Leadership, have evolved directly in relation to the results I have seen from coaching teachers and leaders the Nottingham school where I got my first contract after qualifying to coach at Warwick University in 2015. Unlike most coaching in schools which directly aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning or leadership performance the service I was contracted to provide (and still do) is explicitly aimed at improving wellbeing and is therefore person centred. Another key feature of the service is that it is open to any staff member, no matter where they are in the hierarchy. Anyone can self-refer to achieve specific self-selected personal/professional goals. As a result, coachees have come from all strata, from support staff to members of SLT.

I want to place this discussion firmly within the context starkly highlighted by the Teacher Wellbeing Index 2018, an annual measurement of the mental health and wellbeing of all education professionals. It revealed a "stress epidemic", where "an

alarming 57% have considered leaving within the past two years because of health pressures". Senior leaders are particularly hard hit with "80% suffering from work related stress, 40% suffering from symptoms of depression and 63% considering leaving the profession." (Education Support Partnership, 2018)

Because I started this contract during my first year as a professional coach it has fundamentally shaped my coaching approach. Seeking a coherent theoretical foundation for my approach as it evolved somewhat eclectically, I came across the work first of Professor Carol Ryff (Ryff, 1995) whose psychological wellbeing scale I use as a diagnostic and coaching effectiveness evaluation tool. Then, more recently the work of Professor A M Grant has contributed further to elucidating the flow and direction of work that has evolved out of my desire to meet the needs of those I have been coaching.



Fig 1; Three generations of coaching

	The main focus is on	Core characteristics
First generation 1990–1999	Performance management Compelling others to change Dealing with 'difficult' or remedial employees	Command and control Coaching to specific rankings/ratings Highly transactional
Second generation 2000–2010	Changing others/driving change Maintaining authority and hierarchy Holding standardised 1-2-1 conversations Attaining specific predetermined goals	Prescriptive 'how to coach' models Sees change as linear and to be controlled Highly jargonised training material Propriety coaching language IP owned by coach training company
Third generation 2010–?	Attraction not coercion Leaders modelling change behaviours Shifting individual and organisational mindsets Putting principles into practice Attaining organisational goals/actualising values Change in both individual and system Ensuring synergetic goal alignment	Highly flexible and agile Coaching as a quality conversation not a goal-focused manipulation Appreciates the complexity of change Seamlessly integrates with organisation's language, brand, culture and values (more than white-labelled)

The concept of 3rd generation workplace coaching, mentioned in the title, came from a literature review published by Professor Anthony Grant in *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, called '*The Third 'Generation' Of Workplace Coaching: Creating A Culture of Quality Conversations.*' (Grant, 2017) His focus is on all organisations, not school specific, which use internal coaching carried out by managers or lead professionals who have received some training in coaching as part of a whole organisation approach to performance management and improvement. It is very interesting to reflect on how the three generations he identifies is reflected in education.

First Generation Coaching

First generation workplace coaching is seen as influenced by a relentless focus on performance management that was typified by Jack Welch who was CEO of General Electrical between 1981-2001. His aggressive style of people management bequeathed the

notion of structured, regular performance reviews which became the mainstay of organisations. As a result, the first generation of workplace coaching (circa 1990s) concentrated on teaching managers how to have performance management conversations, often with 'difficult employees'. Grant's literature review reveals that workplace coaching at this time was "invariably associated with managing poor performance." (Burdett, 1998). Rather than being informed by the roots of coaching in the Human Potential Movement concerned with "helping people develop their full potential and supporting them on the path of self-actualisation." First generation coaching came to be associated with command and control approaches to coaching (Wheatley, 1997) and recognised as a severe limitation to talent development, consequently a turn was being made toward more emotionally intelligent approaches informed by the work of people like Goleman (Goleman, 2000). However, I am sure that many of you can still recognise this command and control approach to coaching



coexisting incongruently with the language of empowerment in some of our schools.

Second Generation

The 2000s saw an international trend in the deployment of consultants into organisations with tools and structures designed to drive up performance. Education got its own brand of this in the form of the National Strategies. The focus was on improving teaching through reflective conversations and heavily promoted the use of videoed extracts from classrooms.

I was involved in the wave that hit schools during the early 2000s when as a National Strategy Consultant, I led the deployment into schools of a coaching approach using training materials, 'Sustaining Improvement: A suite of modules on coaching, running networks and capacity building.' When introduced with sensitivity this initiative was met with enthusiasm by school leaders and teachers alike because it encouraged a creative, empowering approach to continuous development.

Grant's topology places it within the second generation of workplace coaching in which external consultants came into organisations to, in his words to 'impose' an 'alien', 'proprietary' approach to coaching inherently alien to the organisational culture into which it was being introduced and which divided workers into zealots or blockers. While some of this may have been true for some schools the picture was altogether more complex and this is captured in the research report published in 2010, *Improving Coaching: Evolution not Revolution*. (Lofthouse et al, 2010).

The growth of coaching in schools was a mixed picture with a few institutions growing sophisticated, organically evolved approaches over time while at the other extreme others imposed poorly thought through approaches designed as a quick fix to poor performance. So while there was no single model imposed on schools from outside there were internal tensions limiting the impact of coaching: The tension here is between the necessary trust based and democratic (C J van Nierwerburgh, 2012) conditions required for coaching to flourish versus the hierarchical structure of schools and the growing tendency in this period toward an 'audit culture' across the education system closely tied up with growing sense of a toxic working environment (R Allen, 2018) leading to growth in stress related illness and a catastrophic decline in teacher recruitment and retention.

By the time I went back into school as an Assistant headteacher in 2008 coaching had moved on to being integrated into leadership development programmes, as well as being classroom practice focused. The increased pressure of performance measures and the reality of stigmatisation as a result of being put into an Ofsted category had also meant that it was increasingly being used as a remedial tool for teachers judged to be inadequate or in need of improvement. My extrapolation from this is that any goal focused activity, including coaching, that is set in such a toxic environment, will only exacerbate performance anxiety and undermine the potential for coaching to support learning and development.

In 2013 I qualified as a professional coach and now feel that I am part of an early but hopefully growing trend toward third generation workplace coaching which is characterised by Grant as focusing not on external performance measures alone, but

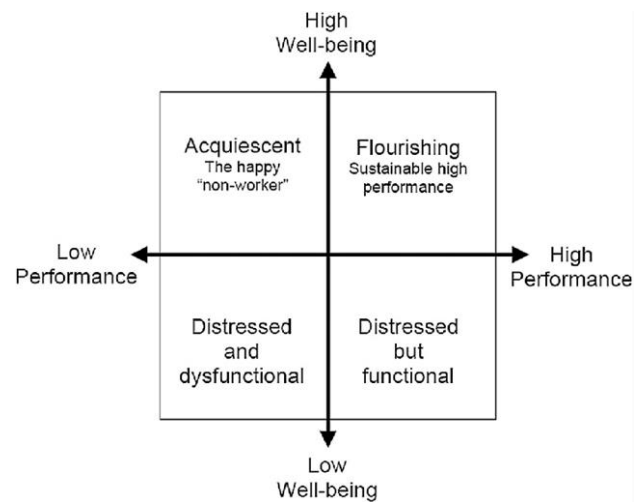


which has an informed balance between performance and wellbeing. From 2010 onward he finds that workplace coaching begins to serve more than just 'performance enhancement' (Jones R, 2016). Organisations are now looking for more sophisticated ways of dealing with constant change, complexity and uncertainty (Stacey, 2005) and coaching is firmly placed within the context of helping to create the conditions for positive organisational change and innovation.

Grant's engagement and wellbeing matrix (Grant, 2010) has contributed to this a shift from measuring the impact of coaching from return on investment (ROI) measures to more holistic and meaningful outcomes. (Grant, 2012). Grant warns,

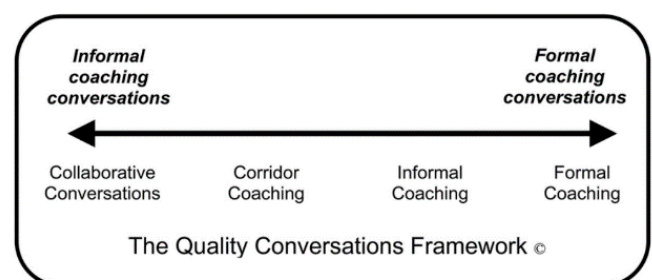
"poorly targeted coaching interventions that myopically focus on ensuring financial returns (or in the case of education percentage rates of progress and pupil attainment targets) may inadvertently increase job related stress as the coachee struggles to achieve unrealistic or inappropriate goals, (L D Ordonez, 2009). On the contrary the literature shows that well-targeted workplace coaching has the potential to deliver a wide range of positive outcomes including increased engagement decreased stress, depression and anxiety, increased resilience as well as goal attainment." (Grant, 2012)

Fig 2; The Wellbeing and Performance Matrix



Grant argues firstly, that the matrix can be used as a lens through which to view the aims of coaching given the current context of high stress in our wider social system which is also reflected in the workplace. Secondly, he states that coaching can be used to shift the whole culture of the organisation away from only using coaching as a formal tool toward coaching seeing coaching as existing on a continuum from formal to informal. He devised the Quality Conversations Framework to support this.

Fig 3; The quality conversations framework



So, what is being advocated?

Based on Grant's work and my own practice, reading and research I would encourage you to ask the following questions:

- How do you measure the impact of coaching in your organisation?
- Is there a coherent match between the values that underpin your approach to coaching and what you measure?
- Which characteristics of 1st, 2nd and third generation coaching are visible in your organisation?

- Where can you see the benefits of adopting the Performance and Wellbeing Matrix and the Quality Conversations Framework to move things forward toward 3rd generation coaching culture?

My next think piece will detail how I have integrated Carol Ryff 's well-established wellbeing measure into my coaching approach, when coaching both individuals and teams.

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Mentoring without courageous conversation about context is like sweeping in a sandstorm

A think piece working paper by Penny Rabiger

Choosing to be mentored or to mentor someone is a difficult decision. Finding someone to mentor you is no easy task. There are many things to factor in to one's choice, such as whether you want someone who you feel is similar to you and just further along their professional journey or perhaps someone different who is able to demystify the world of work for you in a particular field, and refresh your own outlook with their new perspective. The gender, race, class, professional background, age and seniority of the person who mentors you should be important factors to you in your mentoring relationship. Whoever you choose, I would assert that mentoring needs both parties to actively engage with the political, social, economic and other contextual factors affecting *both* the mentor and the mentee.

Identity is for life, not just for childhood

The literature looking through the lens of race and gender in relation to mentoring seems to

deal exclusively with youth mentees and attempts to close the gap of disadvantage for certain identified groups progressing through the education system, or entering into the world of work. It seems that the issues of class-based, gendered and/or race-related discrimination and systemic bias are identified as factors we can discuss and redress in youth, but discourse around this may be under-developed or even avoided in later years. Another problematic element to the literature and potential message of this focus on youth is that it hints at a need to 'treat' the mentee, rather than to examine the structural and systemic sexist, classist and racist mechanisms that call for additional support in the first place.

Sending the elevator back down

One of the key premises of mentoring is around addressing a deficit in social capital – we usually consider this to be a factor especially when a mentor is older and further



along in their career and is able to act as an advocate for a younger, less-connected mentee – or indeed a mentee from a different socio-economic or cultural background to one’s own. In actively engaging in a more politically alert and socially committed attitude to the mentoring relationship, it could be an exciting prospect to see the mentor consciously understanding how they occupy a position of power and influence relative to the dominant societal norms around who holds power and privilege. As a mentor, one may have thought, I am lucky to be in this position of privilege and I benevolently give my time to support others who are still on their way. But what if we could go further than this and go about dismantling the notion of luck, hard work, and meritocracy being the guiding factors and before we metaphorically ‘send the elevator back down’ for a mentee? Could we openly examine what the subjective barriers and enablers were in the mentor’s and the mentee’s journey to date, and what may lie ahead on the onwards journey? How exciting it could be if each party also wanted to expend time and energy on understanding and dismantling the systems which create this imbalance of social capital in the first place, and within the bastion of their own institutions and circles of influence. Is it

enough to send the elevator back down, when we could even act to re-route it?

Doing the work: powerful professional learning and powerful learning for the profession

I’m on a journey reading and thinking about identity. As a straight, able-bodied, cis-gendered woman, and as someone racialised as white, the issue of mentoring has several layers of complexity for me. I believe that it is our responsibility to have courageous conversations and deliberately acknowledge and investigate the influence of race, gender and class to examine what we truly understand about how these influence mentoring experiences. Mentoring in itself doesn’t change much, unless we agree to move the narrative from a personal treatment of symptoms to a bold commitment to curing the systemic and institutional ills which create them. Moving the focus from individual professional learning towards harnessing this for the purpose of powerful learning for our professions, we could, in fact, start with the reasons for the mentoring relationship to begin with, and how each party comes to be in this relationship. This could then progress to a mutual exercise to examine context in more depth - the structures and restrictions



each party may or may not face in their professional journey. Arising from this should result a commitment to work to understand these in context, as well as actively participate

in work to call out and treat bias, discrimination and systemic discrimination within our own practice and our own organisational structures and practices.



'Lesson Chats' @ Mayfield

A practice insight paper by Paula Ayliffe

Mayfield Primary School is a two-form entry local authority school in the north of Cambridge. We are very diverse community with a high number of children with additional needs including 8 children in our hearing support centre. We currently have 47 different languages represented in the school; many of our children are visiting us from overseas as their parents study or work at the two universities in the city. We have many children who are socially, economically and culturally affluent and many who are socially, economically and culturally deprived.

About eight years ago 'Lesson Study' was attempted at Mayfield. However for several reasons it was not as effective as it might have been. Each September teachers received notification of that year's lesson observations, in the days when they were judged, and found that they had also been put down for a lesson study with a particular subject leader. Immediately they felt that the reason for the study must be because they had been identified as somehow 'failing' in that subject and consequently went into the process negatively. As a consequence

they were regarded as another thing to get through and did not, overall, improve the quality of lessons taught.

I became Assistant Head in 2014 and was given the brief of developing subject leadership. This was an opportunity to grow leaders in our school. Previously subject leaders admitted to using their allocated time tidying, organising and updating resources; checking planning and making sure some sort of data was submitted at the end of each year. They did have the opportunity of observing lessons, but as one subject leader said to me, "I know what 'a lesson' should look like, but I'm not sure what 'a lesson in the subject I'm supposed to lead' should look like."

I set about designing a 'subject leader's handbook' which included the task of carrying out a 'planning chat' with another member of staff. Instead of imposing this on someone, a teacher was identified because they had either asked for support, via Appraisal, or it had been identified as something that would be beneficial for them and that they had agreed to. At that time I was also running



an optional after school meeting called 'Tea and Chat' where staff members, mainly teachers and teaching assistants, came together to talk about different aspects of learning. This notion of a low-key, but hugely beneficial mutual

discussion or 'chat', was used as the impetus for this fresh approach.

The first handbook outlined the 'chat' in the following way (figure 1).

Subject Leader planning chat with CTs

Aim: Choose a lesson which the class teacher (CT) will be teaching soon in your subject area. Discuss the following together and take a note of your conversation in your Subject Leaders Handbook. Review with CT after the lesson has been taught.

N.B. This is not in any way a 'test' of either your or the CT's knowledge or understanding, it is simply a professional discussion between two colleagues.

Areas to discuss with CT when discussing a specific lesson together:

- What's the LO?
- What might the success criteria be for this lesson?
- How is differentiation going to happen?
- What will it look like?
- What specifically will you be doing for these groups of children: SN, HA, girls, boys, EAL, Bengali, PP, others?
- How will the lesson start? How will it finish?
- Are specific key skills going to be taught? How?
- Which specific subject knowledge will be included? Are you secure in this?
- Which children are you going to talk to about their learning in this subject? Can they show you're their work?
- Anything else?

Figure 1 First 'chat' version



At the end of the first year I sent out review forms to both the subject leader leading the 'planning chat' and to the teacher receiving the 'chat'. The reviews were overwhelmingly positive.

One teacher enthused, "Never before have I felt able to admit that I needed help understanding what a good geography lesson looked like and actually when I did ask and talked it through I realised that most of what I had been teaching had been quite good. But with a few tweaks, and using the resources in a more open ended way, made a huge difference to my confidence and in turn the quality of the lesson for the children."

The DT leader commented, "It made so much difference knowing that we were having a mutually beneficial conversation and that I wasn't expected to be the DT expert and know all the answers. I came away from the initial chat needing to research a few things and then I fed them back to the teacher and we ended up team teaching the lesson. So good for both of us."

Over the past four years these 'planning chats' have evolved into 'lesson chats' and now involve planning a series of lessons, rather than just one. The latest version of

the 'subject leader's handbook' gives these instructions (see figure 2).

The Teacher Development Trust, on their website (<https://tdtrust.org/what-is-lesson-study>) comments:

"When Lesson Study is implemented incorrectly, there is a risk of adding to an already heavy teacher workload, demotivating teachers and failing to make any difference to pupils' outcomes."

That is exactly where we were. When reviewing appraisal requests at the end of 2017-18, 'lesson chats' were requested by 82% of the teaching staff, not because they were identified as needing further support, but because they wanted it. They are now embedded into our practice, part of the development process for all of our teachers. Each Friday a different year group has a 'Leadership Day' where one teacher has time out of class in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. We have three teaching assistants dedicated to this day – two TAs work with the teacher who is in class; the other TA covers the teacher who is having a 'lesson chat' with the teacher who is out of class for their subject leader time.



Subject Leader 'lesson chat' with CTs 2018-2019	
Subject:	
Theme of lessons planned:	
Discussion between:	
Dates of planned lessons:	
Lessons reviewed?	

Before you start planning in detail consider the following:

- What is the key knowledge that the children need to know?
- What is the key vocabulary that the children will need to use and understand?
- What are the key skills they need to develop in order to be successful in these lessons?
- What are the key questions that you need to ask to check that you have successful learners?

Aim: Choose a series of approximately six lessons which will be taught soon by the class teacher (CT). Plan those lessons together ensuring the following:

- What are the learning intentions?
- Do they ensure progression?
- How are you going to ensure that access and depth happens?
- What will this look like?
- How will the lessons start? How will they finish?
- What might the 'work' that the children produce look like? What expectations will there be?
- Plan specifically for at least one outdoor session which could either be used in an 'Out and About' session or on a Leadership Day.

Don't forget to review the lessons together and include the children and the other adults in this review.

Figure 2 Adapted 'chats'

We have invested in these days because we know that 'lesson chats' are a very effective way of putting CPD into practise. They allow subject leaders to increase their own expertise; they allow class teachers to increase their own subject knowledge and improve their practice; the children are having more thought through

lessons which have their own needs and interests in mind; and the whole school curriculum is more innovative than before. In addition subject leaders continue to observe lessons, check other planning, monitor standards but do so with the increased understanding of how to do this in a more supportive, collaborative way.

Vibrant and Inclusive Library Spaces: Setting the Tone & Building the Culture with the Support of Instructional Coaching

A Practice Insight Working Paper by Sharon Sheehan and Kristen Jacobson

In the US the high school library occupies a unique role in the lives of students. It is one of the few places in the school that is open to everyone and, within guidelines, allows these young adults to choose how to spend their unscheduled time. In an ideal setting, school libraries give students “the freedom to be people—not just students” (Martin & Panter, 2015, p. 10). Recent research suggests that for many teens, the school library is an important place to relax and get away from the stresses of home and their classes as well as to socialize with friends and acquaintances (Martin & Panter, 2015; Bleidt, 2011). It is also an academic space, and although it lacks many of the features of a traditional classroom, such as a class roster or a daily lesson plan, it is a space intended to foster inquiry and discovery. To be effective learning spaces, school libraries need to cultivate and maintain a learner-centered culture.

At Glenbrook South, we are fortunate to have a library space that is very attractive to students and where they feel at home. Around 2500 students choose to spend at

least some of their unscheduled time in the library each day. In a large high school with a diverse student body and a student-centered school culture, the library needs to accommodate competing student learning and socioemotional needs. Some students need a quiet place to study, others need to be free to talk to others when they are studying in a group, and some need access to a comfortable place to relax, possibly reading or listening to music. Others want seats at tables where they can alternately chat with friends and work during their unscheduled times. The library is not exclusively a drop-in space for students, it is also a learning hub for classes working with the librarians as well as for teachers and staff. Our instructional coaching program, our instructional technology program, and the computer labs used for instruction and production are also housed in the library and the needs of their users must also be addressed.

Learner-Centered Design is Not Enough

When we redesigned the library in 2011, we recognized the need to put in spaces to meet these diverse student needs. The library is divided into essentially three zones of activity: a silent study area with carrels, soft chairs in a central reading area that is encircled by bookcases, and an open area with tables and booths for group study. There are adjacent computer labs and professional learning spaces. Due to our school's unique scheduling, many students have up to 90 minutes of consecutive unscheduled time. Our space must support many student visitors each day for long blocks of unscheduled time and has an ever-changing group coming and going. Given these demands, it is essential for the librarians and staff to create expectations and actively foster an environment and library culture that supports these distinct student needs. This is something that we did not adequately anticipate when we divided the space into usage zones; we incorrectly believed the new design features of the library which divided the space into distinct use areas, would be sufficient to develop an environment that was largely student regulated and would require minimal adult intervention. Initially, we struggled with students who did not understand our expectations and had conflicting expectations of their own about how the space should be

used and what constituted appropriate activities. We also underestimated the degree to which a lack of explicit, shared expectations among the staff made it difficult to communicate our expectations to students and to one another, making interactions inconsistent and confusing at times. This led to frustration for everyone involved.

Constructing Our Learner-Friendly Culture through Instructional Coaching

In 2016, the librarians and instructional coaches embarked on a project to foster a better learning and socioemotional climate for students using instructional strategies more often associated with creating an effective classroom culture. This coordinated effort helped us clarify and codify the library staff expectations of ourselves and our students and develop shared vocabulary and practices. We discovered that it was a straightforward process to adapt established best practices for engaging with students in the classroom to the library's unique needs, and this gave us the tools needed to cultivate and maintain the supportive, comfortable learning environment that we had envisioned when we redesigned our space.



The three instructional strategies we focused on are described by Jim Knight in *High Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching* (2013). These strategies are designed to build a positive, productive learning community in classrooms. The first strategy employed was to create and teach a set of expectations for behaviors in each of the three learning spaces. Given the wide range of personalities and spaces in the library, developing a set of expectations for each location allowed us to be clearer. Usually when developing expectations for activities of a classroom, the teacher decides what is expected. Here, the development of expectations was a group activity. In our library we have many adults moving in and out of supervisory positions throughout the day, so the librarians spent time developing a set of expectations for the three zones. These were then shared with the library staff. But, having the expectations alone is not enough; given that the library is a drop-in space where people come and go, students must be informed of what is expected in each space. To accomplish this, we made signs to post in the various locations and spent time at the beginning of the school year talking to students about the variety of spaces and what appropriate behavior looks like in each.

After teaching the expectations, it is necessary to reinforce them with positive attention. Knight calls this second instructional strategy “witness to the good” (2013). When witnessing the good, educators give more attention to what students are doing right instead of what they are doing wrong. Because our attention is more naturally directed at students who are doing things we do not want them to do, this is a difficult strategy to implement even in a classroom where we know all of our students. It is particularly difficult in a large, open space where the students are changing every period. Because of this, the library staff spent time with the instructional coaches to learn strategies to stay focused on the positive. We also practiced ideas for language usage. For instance, at the beginning of a block when it takes students who are headed to the quiet study area too long to get to work, a staff member who is focused on witnessing the good may say, “Thanks to those of you who have gotten to work so quickly. You must have a lot to do today!” This comment draws attention to those students following the expectations while at the same time reminding students to have a seat and get to work. These interactions serve to reinforce the expectations and help build a positive community.



The third strategy is to determine and apply a consistent set of corrections when behaviors are not matching expectations. Even with clear expectations and witnessing the good, student behavior still needs to be corrected. Thinking through our corrections was the next phase of the work as we realized that we were not all implementing the same corrections for the same behaviors. Even in a classroom setting, it is difficult to be consistent and clear when correcting students. With our multiple staff members, we had to take time to discuss students' most common disruptive behaviors and plan consistent responses to them. In our staff meetings we discussed particular behaviors and consistent responses to them.

Conclusion

By being steadfast in our expectations and corrections and with our witnessing positive behaviors, we were able to teach students about the three zones and how to utilize

them. This had a dramatic impact on the quality of the staff's interactions with our students as well as helping the students reinforce the expectations with one another. It is now common to see students politely informing work partners and neighboring tables to lower their voices. They have internalized the expectations and recognize that the library works best when everyone is on the same page. According to Oldenburg (1999), people need places "where individuals may come and go as they please, in which no one is required to play host, and in which we all feel at home and comfortable" (p. 22). As people become more familiar with a place and develop a sense of belonging, they are more likely to actively enforce the social norms (p. 83). This buy-in from students is essential for keeping the library a place that is low-stress and inviting to all. It has required a shift in attitude from both the staff and the students, but the payoff from dedicating ourselves to consistently promoting clear expectations and witnessing the good has been great. It has unquestionably helped to make our library a better, more welcoming place for all of the GBS community.

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Growing Great Teachers: Improve Not Prove

A practice insight working paper by Chris Moyse

Recently I was asked by my CEO to find a solution to the largely ineffective performance management processes that we currently have within our trust. This is my response; **'Growing Great Teachers'** – a complete replacement for performance management.

So here is our policy for professional growth which comes into action in September 2019. Some bits will inevitably be tweaked as we go along but this is our starting point. I do hope that you find it thought-provoking and interesting. This is OUR solution not THE solution. The focus is on 'getting better' rather than 'being good'; **'Improving not proving'**.

Please note there is trust documentation which accompanies this approach, which is available to view on the blogpost identified at the end of the working paper.

If you like a good spreadsheet or measuring stuff then this may not be for you. But if you want to create a professional learning environment where staff are trusted and valued then read on.

GROWING GREAT TEACHERS

'Growing great teachers' is Bridgwater College Trust's professional growth policy that puts improving and maintaining the highest quality of teaching at the very heart of the process. It focuses on genuinely continuous professional development.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge to us all within the Bridgwater College Trust is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow. We need to reinforce the status of our wonderful profession and promote teacher well-being in order to unlock the skill, passion and discretionary effort that undoubtedly exists within our teachers. The quality of our teaching is at the top of our agenda and we view our teachers as our greatest asset. Therefore, our professional growth processes exist to ensure that our teachers are able to be the very best they can be. This in turn leads to improved organisational performance as seen in improved outcomes for our students and our core purpose of ensuring that *'Every Child Achieves'*.



The Bridgwater College Trust has removed traditional 'performance management' and have replaced it with 'professional growth'; a different perspective and a new direction designed to challenge thinking, promote deep reflection, collaboration and change for the better.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent approach to the development of our teachers and our expectations in terms of the high standards to which all our teachers aspire. It is a policy based on professional trust. It is assumed therefore, unless evidence suggests otherwise, that Bridgwater College Trust teachers are meeting the Teachers' Standards.

PURPOSE

Our 'Professional Growth' policy outlines the approach that we take to help our teachers to become the very best version of themselves; supporting them to make the next steps but also creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us.

Professional growth within this trust has several purposes;

- To build and enhance expertise, and secure continuous growth and improvement
- To enable reflection on strengths and successes, and areas for further growth
- To recognise and promote a culture of professionalism

Effective professional development is a core part of securing effective teaching. It requires a desire and willingness to continually improve with a shared commitment for teachers to support one another to develop so that our students benefit from the highest quality teaching. We cannot achieve this level of professional learning alone. This policy is designed to change the way we view accountability and professional development. It is a process that requires a commitment from all teachers to active practical and cognitive engagement in order to seek further growth in professional knowledge that provides solutions to the issues we face as teachers. Professional growth in the Bridgwater College Trust is 'done by' not 'done to' our teachers.

We have a sense of belief and pride that we can be the very best, driven by a sense of moral purpose and a desire to continuously improve. We regard professional development as a key driver not only of staff



development, but also of recruitment, retention, well-being, and school improvement. There can be no improvement without the teacher.

Our 'Professional Growth' policy outlines the approach that we will take to help our teachers to become the very best version of themselves; supporting them to make the next steps in their careers but also creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us in the Bridgwater College Trust.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Effective, and genuinely continuous, professional growth...

- has a focus on improving student outcomes
- builds and enhances knowledge and expertise to bring about changes in practice
- has a narrow yet significant focus
- acknowledges that knowledge and expertise is domain specific
- recognises that novice and experts learn differently
- focuses on what works, challenges existing assumptions and is, therefore, evidence-informed
- involves collaboration with colleagues and peer support
- is sustained over time and includes frequent opportunities for learning; experimentation and practice, reflection and evaluation, honest frequent feedback and solutions-focused coaching.

The education of our students is our first concern, and we are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. The Teachers' Standards define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). The Teachers' Standards also set out a number of expectations about professional growth.

Teachers should:

- keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and be self-critical and reflective;
- take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;



- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this has an impact on their teaching;
- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas;
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of their teaching;
- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

Rather than starting with how to do professional development, we should be clear about what we hope to achieve and what teachers already know and do. Therefore professional growth involves effective reflection. Within this trust the Teachers' Standards form our benchmark for reflection, review and evaluation in order to ensure that our teachers identify areas for further growth and continue to maintain the level of competence that qualified them at the start of their careers.

As a solutions-focused trust, we need to ensure our practices focus on solutions, not problems, on finding answers within our

colleagues rather than having imposed, often superficial, targets which all too often become forgotten. We also need to ensure that we help our teachers build on their strengths first before they start fixing their weaknesses. The evidence we use to reflect on performance and development will not be solely based on student data or a small number of lesson observations. The Trust, therefore, will have no high stakes observations and rejects the notion that our teaching staff should be held to account for data-driven targets that no one individual can be solely accountable for.

Instead the Trust is committed to developing a professional culture which drives quality assurance from within; an enabling process rather than an imposed top down process.

EVALUATING YOUR PROGRESS

The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take personal responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional growth will be linked to Trust, subject or phase improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers and, of course, the students they teach.



As long as our teachers continue to meet the **Teachers' Standards** and engage in the process of professional growth, pay progression will be automatic and not linked to any mechanism of traditional 'performance management'. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

In order for our process of professional growth to be successfully completed the following criteria need to be addressed:

- Teachers will reflect on their successes, strengths and areas for further growth against the **Teachers' Standards**. There is no RAG rating but a personal scaling exercise for each standard. Use the scale after each standard to reflect on how well you are doing against each standard and, most importantly, what you might do next to become even better. This can then be shared as a prompt for the discussion and possible goal setting.

Reflection on the **Teachers' Standards** at the start of the cycle will help to better establish an individual focus for professional growth which is then further detailed in a **professional growth plan**. Each teacher, therefore, needs to carefully reflect on their current context, standards and practice to ascertain the most impactful development focus. The focus will be then be discussed and

established with the support of the teacher's line manager.

To aid this discussion and the establishment of a challenging focus a script is recommended for use by line managers. This focus is sustained over a significant amount of time and all staff are required to engage in opportunities for learning and experimentation, reflection and evaluation, feedback and coaching. It is intended that professional growth and learning, rather than just being confined to meetings in specific times and places, will become embedded into teachers' everyday work practices.

- Teachers will regularly reflect on their progress of the 'professional growth plan' as they design lessons to purposely practise the focus of their ongoing learning and subsequently reflect on the effectiveness of any changes in practice.
- This sustained development work will be presented to subject or age group colleagues at the end of the cycle for the benefit of reflection, accountability and sharing effective practice.
- All staff are also required to engage fully with any whole school/trust professional growth priorities.
- In addition, any Upper Pay Range teacher, TLR holder or member of staff on the



leadership pay spine will have a goal linked to our Leadership Qualities Framework. This goal will be recorded on the **leadership goal plan**.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

What knowledge and skills do we need to address the learning needs of our students?

In order for our teachers to answer this question, they are asked to take control of their own professional learning and plan for how they will meet the needs of their class or a specific class; 'the professional growth plan'.

For professional growth to be truly continuous and sustained over time, each teacher formulates a 'professional growth plan'. This requires each teacher to reflect on current practice and subsequently build their expertise through sustained focused inquiry and frequent purposeful practice. Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are not required to undertake this task as they have a separate programme of support and development.

This individual and unique plan will identify what we hope we will learn or do differently, and the approaches to achieve this; content and process. The professional growth plans

also require our teachers to identify the possible impact of their work on students' outcomes although it is recognised that in the complex process of teacher growth, impact on students' outcomes is difficult to directly correlate. Nonetheless, this policy is built on the assumption that changing a teacher's practice will change the students' learning experiences and therefore impact their outcomes. Improvement in students' learning is the central purpose of the process.

Therefore, the 'professional growth plan' requires the learning to be ongoing and in depth as this is more likely to have far more positive impact on practice and outcomes for students than brief and superficial 'training' that lacks focus and context.

In the 'professional growth plan' a clear goal is set by each teacher – a focus on what to change or develop further with intended impact. We value the importance of autonomy and choice in the focus of each individual's development and we understand that providing staff with opportunities to substantially affect and direct their own goals, practice and inquiry is a powerful motivator. Our professional learning must be driven by an individual's motivation to become even better rather than being told what to do. Those teachers who set and monitor their



own goals are those who will continue to grow as professionals. We will, therefore, provide effective training, opportunities and time that will give our teachers the chance to work on a focus of their choosing that positively affects the students they teach.

This focus for this bespoke plan will, of course, be chosen within parameters and our teachers are expected to connect their work to the class(es) taught and subject, phase, school or trust priorities.

Knowledge and expertise is domain specific: expertise requires knowledge and skill in a specific area. Any professional learning must therefore be as specific as possible to the context in which it will be used: to the subject, topic or year group. With a clear goal and an assessment of what is needed to achieve it, support can be then focused on meeting those needs.

The 'professional growth plan' is a 'live' document and the expectation is that is reflected on and referred to frequently, adjusted where appropriate, but it always forms the basis of our continuous professional growth. A major part of our professional learning is trying out things in practice. Teachers are therefore expected and

encouraged to purposefully practise; to design lessons that force them out of autopilot and ensure a deliberate focus on experimentation within their classroom. To ensure that growth is continuous and progress ensured, our teachers are expected to engage also with professional support.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Professional support will be available for all of our teachers so that they can continue to grow and develop. This support can take many forms; dialogue, conversations and co-planning, mentoring and coaching, analysis, feedback and observation.

Feedback

Providing people with feedback on how they are doing against their goals increases the chances of those goals being reached. Any feedback for the teacher should therefore focus on the agreed development area and should be provided as soon as possible after any support or visit has taken place. Feedback from classroom observation should be feedback as information and where possible, and appropriate, be non-judgemental. The subsequent conversation is where the learning and action should take place and this structured professional dialogue focuses on the further development of an area of need



for the teacher and/or their students. These conversations will be challenging yet respectful dialogue about improvement. Therefore, during this conversation the teacher and the 'coach' will always identify a next step; as feedback without goal setting, is just information.

Observation

The Trust recognises that lesson observation is a poor method for judging the quality of teaching. Therefore, lesson observations will NOT be graded and will NOT be used as a single indicator of performance or as a single indicator for assessing whether the Teachers' Standards have been met.

However, it also recognises that feedback from observing and being observed are essential to growing great teachers. Consequently lesson observation within the Trust has two main purposes:

- To help the teacher you are observing become even better
- To learn from the teacher you are observing

All staff are expected to engage with the available professional support as a means of

further developing their own practice. If observation is the preferred method of professional support then the timing and focus for the observation will be determined by the teacher being observed. During the course of the year all teachers are required to receive feedback on their professional growth focus in order to build and enhance expertise, and secure continuous growth and improvement. Feedback enables reflection on strengths and successes, and planning of next steps necessary for further growth. Therefore, any professional support including observations of practice will be carried out in a supportive and developmental manner by a pre-designated colleague, usually the teacher's line manager.

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and those teachers receiving additional support will receive more professional support to enable more rapid growth. An individual teacher is free to request additional support to receive further feedback in order to support their continuing growth.

All teachers are expected to support and learn from colleagues. **Therefore**, during the course of the year, each teacher is expected to observe a colleague with the sole focus of going to learn from them. This visit will enable each teacher to identify possible next steps in



their development based on the learning gained from their colleague. Teachers should be the drivers of their own professional collaboration.

UPPER PAY RANGE

The Upper Pay Range is a salary range available to qualified teachers who have been assessed as being eligible to be paid at this level. Moving on to the Upper Pay Range is often referred to as 'crossing the threshold'.

To move onto the Upper Pay Range our teachers must demonstrate that:

- They are highly competent in all of the Teachers' Standards and have an extensive knowledge and understanding of how to use and adapt a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies.
- They have fully engaged in the process of professional growth leading to an extensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical developments within their relevant phase or subject.
- Their achievements and contribution to their school are 'substantial and sustained'. We believe that as long as they have met the Teachers' Standards that they have met the 'substantial' criterion. The 'sustained' criterion should

be two years or more working at this level. Our teachers do not, therefore, have to be at the top of the main pay range to apply for the Upper Pay Range.

- They have the potential and commitment to undertake professional duties which make a wider contribution to their school. This will often involve working beyond their own classroom and possibly their school to guide the professional growth of other teachers. This may include the sharing of good practice, mentoring and coaching, and providing demonstration lessons for less experienced colleagues. Upper Pay range teachers are expected to promote collaboration and work effectively as a team member.

Applying for Upper Pay Range

There is no formal application process to move to the Upper Pay Range and our teachers are not be required to maintain a portfolio of evidence to support their application. As it is a voluntary process, teachers should make their headteacher aware that they wish to be considered to progress on to the Upper Pay Range.

Applications can be made at any time during the academic year but only once a year.



Maintaining the standard

When teachers move on to the Upper Pay Range they must maintain this standard. The Trust will provide the support they need to be able to do this so that they continue to make a substantial and sustained contribution to the school and the development of their colleagues' skills for the benefit of all learners.

Progression within the Upper pay Range

Progression within the upper pay range will be automatic as long as our teachers continue to fully meet the Teachers' Standards, engage in the process of professional growth, and sustain a substantial and wider contribution to the school. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

The challenge to us all within the Bridgewater College Trust is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow as 'great teachers'.

I am hugely grateful to [Gary Jones \(@DrGaryJones\)](#), [Gareth Alcott \(@GalcottGareth\)](#), [Chris Hunt \(@chuculcethhigh\)](#) and [Ian Frost \(@Ianfrost28\)](#) for giving up their time to read through all the documents in order to provide me with such honest, insightful and thought-provoking feedback. Thank you. Your wisdom, encouragement and expertise is so appreciated and has helped me enormously to shape this policy.

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This working paper was first published as a blog post at

<https://chrismoyse.wordpress.com/2019/01/30/growing-great-teachers-improve-not-prove/>



Teaching the Thinking Environment - A Personal Reflection

A practice insight working paper by Lou Mycroft

All quotes are from Advanced Practitioners (APs) in further education and training, who participated in Thinking Environment training as part of the #APConnect Developing Advanced Practitioners programme 2018-19.

I've been learning, practising and living a 'thinking environment' (Kline, 2009) for nearly a quarter of a century, since my son was born. Initially I trained at the Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in Sheffield (with the baby) and then, more than a decade later, when the process was no longer in its own infancy, I collected my tickets as a thinking environment consultant on a Thames riverboat with Nancy Kline herself. Maybe twenty days training, an intensive practicum and ten years of attending local and international Collegiate practice meetings. A significant (and for many people inaccessible) investment of time and money that I was privileged to have subsidised for me in a variety of ways. And no 'formal' qualification at the end of it, meaning that a significant level of mastery could not find an official place to sit, in conventional structures of professionalism. Easy, therefore, to find reasons to overlook its presence in the organisation and in further education as a whole, where coaching has many gatekeepers and is 'set in its ways, arguably too reliant on

tried and tested tools' (Ward and Stevenson, 2018 p.27).

The thinking environment is a set of applications of ten values, or components: ease, attention, encouragement, diversity, feelings, place, equality, information, appreciation and incisive questions. When all ten are in place, the thinking environment is held: whether that's in group facilitation, coaching, mentoring, meetings, tutorials or any other application. It's quietly revolutionary if practised with discipline and not, as its detractors claim, woolly; rather it is boundaried and very precise, a simple and rigorous set of rules which compel people to think for themselves and think better together.

At various times, I've taught others how to operate in a thinking environment; certainly it's been at the subversive heart of my pedagogy, co-facilitated with the teacher education team I led back in the day (Mycroft and Sidebottom, 2017). We ran our team as a thinking environment and, as far as the strictures of curriculum and the organisation allowed us to transgress, opened up spaces to practice most of its applications, one way or another. Over the years we facilitated thinking environment sessions with



educators, youth workers, nurses, elected members...though we could do no more than provide tools and hope that they were picked up and used with rigour (like so much in life, if you don't do it right, it doesn't work...). From time to time I daydreamed about going full-on freelance thinking environment, but it didn't seem likely that I'd find many people in my South Yorkshire homelands who could afford to pay for two and three day courses in posh hotels. With sole parenting and caring responsibilities I couldn't go too far afield and in any case I wanted to do the work with people who would benefit from it the most: those whose voices aren't already easily heard in our society. Looking back I was surprisingly obedient to the beautifully indulgent and resource-heavy pedagogy I'd experienced; I assumed I couldn't condense the teaching without diminishing the impact.

Then, as that quarter century approached, having raised my son within its values, an opportunity to teach the thinking environment to experienced further education educators presented itself. A 50-minute slot on Day 1 of the #APConnect Developing Advanced Practitioners training, funded by The Education and Training Foundation. Fifty minutes to communicate 25 years of learning. Naturally, I took the challenge. Aided by some beautiful postcards and a huge whiteboard to scribble up the ten

components and a list of the applications, I taught by doing, stories of my practice interspersed with opportunities to try out thinking rounds and pairs. It did the trick. Not quite enough, perhaps, that first time, but enough to encourage some people to ask for more. Maria Brand went on to [blog](#) her experience of using the thinking environment mentoring application with parents and children in a family learning situation:

"This five minutes of time had a profound effect on both parents and children. The children were empowered to speak and be heard then they listened, remembered and shared something positive about themselves. The parents were quite emotional, and their children were embracing them."

When participants returned for a second short workshop three months later they'd had time to think, read, forget, shelve, try bits out...and they'd retained a sense of intrigue:

"I can't remember what we did, but I felt myself relax as soon as I walked back into this room."

We went straight into Time to Think Councils, an application focused on applying diverse perspectives to a complex issue. This proved



to be a winner...from this point onwards thinking environments caught fire:

"Thinking environments revolutionised my perceptions of education."

Participants asked questions, sought mentoring support and invited us in to train their staff - and management - teams. This would not have been possible without an initial session covering the basics and the learning experience was ably supported by the '[how to why to](#)' guide (Mycroft and Sidebottom, 2018), commissioned as part of the programme. After twenty-odd years, thinking environments began rippling out through further education; still resisted where people refused to share power but ferried forward by purposeful evangelists. A thinking environment colleague referred to me on Twitter as "*an overnight success!*"

Thinking environments can be sabotaged, for sure, but their beauty is that they can't be subverted: the sabotage is at least out in the open. Being upfront about this has been helpful for educators who are struggling with implementing radical, equalising new practices into organisations built on hierarchies of power. Once engaged in a thinking environment application, participants are 'equal as thinkers' (otherwise the component of equality is not being honoured). Some people with power don't

want to leave it at the door; some people without power don't want to find the courage to speak in their own voice or, indeed, speak at all.

"I am used to others interrupting and trying to finish my sentences, it enabled me to build bonds quickly, and I felt valued as I contributed to the thinking and sharing of knowledge."

Thinking environment processes cut to the heart of where power sits in an organisation and can be significant in enabling culture change. As the year progressed, I began to address this more intentionally. At a gathering of APs in London, a new question for the opening round caused some discomfort: "Where in your practice do you feel most powerful, and why?" This helped me to make another shift: build into the initial session a differentiation between *potestas* (hierarchical power) and *potentia* (activist power) (Braidotti, 2018). In subsequent sessions, APs grasped this immediately and began to recognise their own *potentia* in using thinking environment applications to break up ground for new thinking.

Over the past year, testimonials to the power of thinking environments to change the petrified structures, systems and assumed norms of further education (Mycroft, 2019)



have sounded back to me and I have left behind many of my own untrue limiting assumptions about how to teach this quietly radical discipline. Less, as it turns out, is certainly more and 50 minutes can go a long way, as long as conditions allow for a thinking environment to be experienced by each individual and resources are in place for people to go away and have a go. #APConnect facilitated this through the provision of a guide, online discussion platforms, my own approachability and, in some funded cases, mentoring. Cultures are, indeed, beginning to change:

'But the energy it created was infectious, to the point that the whole workplace are setting up their own communities for everything from

observation support meetings, to lesson planning and even a mud run 'community of practice.'"

There is research to be done. In a sector fraught with *potestas* power relations and dominated by repeated calls for narrowly interpreted 'evidence bases', the culture change potential of thinking environments can be compellingly resisted. However the echoes of shifting power relations, transformations in communication, affirmative changes to staff and student mental health wellbeing and the positive impact of thinking environments on learning cultures have the potential to stand up robustly to research scrutiny. Perhaps, in this challenging, dysfunctional world, the time has come to make this happen.

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I Like It. What Is It?

A think piece Working Paper by Jonny Uttley

I am a huge fan of the artist Anthony Burrill and have just treated myself to this new print to hang in my office. It makes me smile and for me it captures the spirit of the brilliant trust team I have the privilege of working with. It can be read two ways though; as an articulation of an adventurous and open-minded spirit (which is what my team certainly has in abundance!) or as a naïve acceptance of anything that looks shiny, new and exciting. The former has enormous potential for good; the latter is one of the curses of English education.

One of the shiniest and most exciting new things in education is ethical leadership. ASCL, the NGA and many others have rightly identified the promotion of an ethical framework for school leadership as one of the most pressing and significant issues for the system. I have spoken about it at a number of events recently and am always greeted with smiles, nods and general agreement that this is a good thing.

We like it. What is it?



And herein lies the difficulty. I have never met anyone who describes themselves as an unethical school leader and yet we all recognise unethical behaviour. Whenever I stand in front of Year 7 students in a hall on the first day in September, I say that they may not know all the school rules yet but they all know the difference between good behaviour and bad behaviour. Similarly, in school leadership, we all know that some things are wrong no matter what.



For example, it must always be wrong to encourage a family to “educate” their child at home rather than recording an exclusion, it must always be wrong to register a student somewhere else to improve a league table position, it must always be wrong to enter an entire cohort of students for a meaningless qualification to inflate the open bucket. And while not everything is black and white, in a world of comparable outcomes, it is difficult to defend leadership behaviour that undermines other school leaders who are desperately trying to do the right thing.

For my trust, ethical leadership is about doing what we know is right; trusting our colleagues professionally; being kind and brave; behaving in ways that specifically reduce fear and anxiety in our schools and reminding ourselves always that we are here to serve others. We have re-written our leadership standards around an ethical framework and clearly articulate the behaviours leaders must show. We recruit around these standards and leadership development is about supporting leaders to get even better. This isn’t some soft and woolly nice thing to have; it is the most

important facet of creating schools that great teachers want to work in. After all, the worst kept secret in English education is that teachers don’t want to stick around in a toxic culture where fear has replaced trust.

The critical importance of ethical leadership though, goes way beyond the behaviour and decision making of individual school leaders and leadership teams. It has to underpin the entirety of a school or trust’s operations; what it seeks to achieve; how it measures itself and, in the case of a trust, how it grows. Because although little in education is ever truly black and white, two distinct approaches have emerged. In one approach the focus is on results above performance; rapid growth; systems that ensure compliance and a culture of high anxiety and low trust, high accountability but low autonomy. It is one of the great shames of recent years that this model has been courted, lauded, held up to be copied and the myth that any school can be “transformed” in two terms has perpetuated. Meanwhile, leaders and teachers are leaving the profession in record numbers.



Ethical Leadership Qualities: Competencies and Behaviours		
Competency	We do this by	Behaviours
Trust – leaders are trustworthy and reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earning trust by being reliable, consistent, credible, honest, humble, courageous and kind. Prioritising our long-term purpose first, above short-term goals. Managing emotions and helping others to manage their emotions. Keeping promises. Having a genuine interest in others, seeking to understand the whole person. Using a range of communication skills in a range of circumstances with a range of people, developing rapport, trust and a deeper level of understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live our values every day. Take every opportunity to communicate and apply our values, showing how they guide and inform decisions. Do what is right, rather than what is popular. Be accountable to your colleagues, students and the community, acting in service to other. Influence the behaviour of those around you. Take time to develop high trust relationships. Act selflessly to protect and enable the trust to achieve its purpose.

One of our leadership competencies: Trust

In Issue 5 of *CollectivEd*, Andrew Mears talked about the predominance of a culture in which “short-term-school-turn-around-super-salary-Super-Heads with fire-and-hire shape-up or ship-out philosophy were being sought without a thought to the medium to long term effect upon our profession” (1). Colin Lofthouse, in Issue 4 of *CollectivEd* goes even further, suggesting “political leaders and policy makers seem to be trying their best to engineer a complete lack of trust in the people they are asking to transform [the system]”. (2) At times, as a Headteacher, it has certainly felt like that.

There is however, another way. There are lots of great leaders in academies, maintained schools and trusts who lead in a different way. The focus is on performance before results; growth is deliberate and not for its own sake; systems are about improvement not compliance; the culture is of low anxiety and

high trust; accountability is just as high but here autonomy is too. Leaders in these schools are driven by a strong sense of moral purpose and have the wisdom to understand the central importance of vibrant work cultures in retaining teachers in the profession. They also have the courage to lead in this way and to care about young people and staff in other leaders’ schools, despite the fact that the accountability system - particularly the comparable nature of league tables – makes it excruciatingly difficult at times. The more people who lead this way, the better the system will become because it is through our collective behaviour that the system will thrive or fail.

I like it. It is ethical **system** leadership. Shall we start talking about that?





What is real ethical school leadership?



<p>High performing schools and trusts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid growth • Results driven • Low autonomy; high accountability • Low professional trust • Systems driven by policy compliance • High challenge; high threat • Weak sense of moral purpose • Negative work environment • Unsustainable • Toxic for broader system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate growth • Performance driven • High autonomy; high accountability • High professional trust • Systems driven by performance and improvement • High challenge; low threat • Strong sense of moral purpose • Vibrant work environment • Sustainable • Deep commitment to broader system
<p>Low performing schools and trusts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent growth • Results driven • Low autonomy; inconsistent accountability • Low professional trust • Systems driven by external accountability (Ofsted etc.) • Inconsistent challenge; high threat • Weak sense of moral purpose • Negative work environment • Unsustainable • Low performance creates problems for broader system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks growth • Personality driven • High autonomy; low accountability • Laissez-faire approach to trust • Weak and inconsistent systems • Low challenge; low threat • Confused sense of moral purpose • Pleasant work environment • Unsustainable • Low performance creates problems for broader system

Trust development framework: Our trustees are clear they want our schools to operate in the green box

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Book Review of Cain, T. *Becoming a Research-Informed School*. 2018. Routledge, *by John Bald*

Why? What? How?

Tim Cain and his colleagues offer us something close to a 360° view of how schools and teachers really approach and use research, rather than how researchers might think they ought to use it. A key feature is the extensive use of extracts from interviews with teachers and leaders taking part in collaborative research projects based at Edge Hill over five years, involving 85 schools in all parts of the country. Another is consistently careful choice of words to describe research findings and their limitations, including the authors' own. For example, while they investigate how and why the teachers they have worked with use research, they are frank about knowing relatively little about why teachers do *not* use it.

Most of us reading this will share the authors' view that research is a positive influence. A series of chapters discuss and demonstrate a wide range of benefits, including informing decision-making, developing teachers' understanding of their work, giving them access to a wider range of thinking than that of their own school, and encouraging a critical attitude. In one case, a school that had tried

to reach out to disadvantaged parents through a series of coffee mornings was persuaded by researchers to move to a programme designed to help them to help their children, an approach that worked better. I've seen similar impacts in the Basildon Excellence Project. Emotional dimensions are explored too, including the unsurprising reaction of one girl on a gifted and talented programme who broke down on being told that her target was A* in every subject. The teacher's response to this, and other overloading, was to set up a lunchtime club where the pupils could come and either work or chat, with no pressure. In both cases, the research environment encouraged the teachers to look hard at what was actually happening, and to change it.

For thirteen years or so, I reviewed research in reading and language development for The TES, and found that the only way I could do this was to go to the raw data, see exactly what it was, how it had been obtained and what had been done to it. Only a very few studies – notably Bradley and Bryant on phonological awareness in reading – could stand such scrutiny, and for this reason I made straight for this book's Chapter 6, Obtaining



Trustworthy Research. I was not disappointed. Critics of the meta-analysis that has made Professor John Hattie a best-seller, even though, by his own admission, he does not read the studies on which his work is based, are quoted with approval. These include the following:

- No account is taken of the duration of each intervention (or, indeed of the quality of the research)
- Diverse outcomes are jumbled together, including literacy, numeracy, other specific curriculum areas and psychological gains
- Effect sizes tell us as much about the research design, as the impact of the intervention they are supposed to measure
- Sometimes Hattie uses “effect size” to mean “as compared to a control group” and at other times to mean “as compared to the same students before the study started.

Similar criticisms are levelled at the most recent British quango, The Educational Research Foundation, for its “one size fits all” ranking of thirty interventions in terms of their supposed benefits to pupils’ progress. Small wonder that this confused morass is termed “pseudo-science” by some critics, and yet, two pages earlier, we see that Hattie is

valued because of a “strong underlying research base”. These two views are incompatible, and the reasons people hold them need to be teased out.

Doctoral research, on the use of school-generated data, is the focus of one chapter, which takes a descriptive approach. Only towards the end does it consider the impact of data collection on teachers’ personal lives - “I get ill once a half-term because I get run down because I’m pushed to my limit doing it” - and indeed integrity. Teachers report having to give grades students did not deserve in order to put their department in a good light, an issue that goes to the heart of their personal integrity and deserves more than a passing mention. Doctoral research in education is at a crossroads. The best, e.g. the late Katharine Perera’s investigation of the development of phrasing in children’s reading, (Manchester, 1989) is around 1000 pages, with an innovative recording system based on a musical stave, and some new findings on the link between the rate of word identification and the development of phrasing. Its readership is almost certainly still only in double figures, and took some time to reach those. The worst - no names here - are series of essays that would not pass muster as a thesis. All are available via the British Library. Perhaps the key issue is that the PhD is a relic of medieval universities and their thinking,



and not readily adapted to the needs of the modern world.

On the other hand, Chapter 10, on Lesson Study, offers detailed analysis of an approach that originated in Japan and is little known in British schools. Unlike most school- and inspection-based forms of observation, its goal is not to identify the best possible teaching methods, but to give participants insights into children's thinking. Most teachers have little opportunity to work with individual pupils in any depth, and it is rarely included in teacher training. Lesson observation is also hierarchical, whether within the school or externally, and hence stressful. In this model, the lesson is planned jointly, hierarchy

suspended for the duration, and all participants free to observe pupils and processes without feeling threatened. An excellent chapter, and worth the price of the book on its own.

There are of course loose ends, or avenues for further work, the most important of which is probably the growing body of evidence from brain research, which receives only one mention, in a reference to Professor Sarah-Jane Blakemore's *The Learning Brain*. Those interested might also care to read her latest book, *Becoming Ourselves*, which considers changes in the brain during adolescence.



Narratives of collaboration in practice; discourses, dimensions and diversity in collaborative professional development

A Research Insight Paper by Rachel Lofthouse

In May 2019 I will be presenting a paper at the TEPE conference in Krakow, and in this working paper I am outlining my initial thinking based on the research process so far. This is therefore NOT a complete paper, and further synthesis will allow a greater critical engagement with the literature.

Introduction

This research is the first thematic review of narratives of collaborative practice as given in ‘practice insight’ working papers published by CollectivED. It reveals the diversity of practices and how the dimensions of these practices stimulate, frame and limit collaboration and in what ways the practitioner authors create discourses of collaboration. Through this analysis the following research question will be addressed: *What can we learn from practitioners’ narratives of collaborative professional development, and are key lessons to be found amongst its complexities?*

Methods of selection and analysis

I have used purposive sampling in order to begin to answer the research question above. Nine practice insight working papers have been selected from the CollectivEd working

papers. Each describes specific collaborative practices, situated in the school or college where the participants’ work develops over time or is used in a related professional development setting. All of the selected papers are focused on supporting the ongoing work of in-service teachers and school leaders in the UK. The sample includes practices focused on individuals’ professional development or role support at a particular career stage, but the majority describe practices which deliberately bring together practitioners with varied degrees of experience in forms of collaborative CPD. Each one is focused on development of one or more of the following: reflection, teaching and learning, leadership and/or cultural change. In each case the authors are writing from the insider-perspective, each playing a role in supporting and enabling the collaborative practices. In eight papers the authors are either colleagues or leaders working internally to support the practice or as external facilitators with specific expertise. One paper is written from the perspective of the teacher accessing the support. The papers describe emerging practices in the specific context, ones that have been introduced or evolved relatively recently rather than long-established practices. To be selected the



papers had to include descriptions of the practice in specific contexts, which went beyond a procedural account of how it was implemented in the setting, to include some insights into the experience of participants and / or the impacts of the practice.

Where more than one practice insight paper on the same named practice has been published in CollectivED working papers (e.g. on lesson study, coaching cultures) one paper has been selected as illustrative (not

necessarily representative) of that practice.

Inevitably there are overlaps between the practices, despite the fact that each is attributed a different label by the authors. Working papers written as research summaries or think pieces have not been included in the sample. The papers included in the sample were published between December 2017 and May 2019. The selected papers are outlined in table 1, with full references given in the reference list.

Paper title	Author(s) & positionality	Focus of practice	Context	Summary used in this paper
Researching our practice using The Discipline of Noticing	Daniel Brown; Internal facilitator & middle leader	Collaborative CPD	FE	Discipline of Noticing
From teachers being accountable to taking collective responsibility' using Lesson Study for cultural change	Colin Lofthouse; Headteacher Claire King; External facilitator	Collaborative CPD	Primary	Lesson Study
Breathing Space; enabling professional learning through alternative staff meetings	Rebecca Jackson; Headteacher	Collaborative CPD	Primary	Alternative staff meetings
Developing a learning culture in schools	George Gilchrist; Headteacher & Internal facilitator	Collaborative CPD	Primary	Learning Culture
Working together: Coaching as the compass in the journey of implementation	Kelly Ashley and North Star TSA; External facilitator with Teaching School	SSIF project Coaching	10 primary schools	SSIF Project Coaching
Thinking Environments	Lou Mycroft; External facilitator	Collaborative CPD	FE	Thinking Environment
Being mentored through CTeach	Stephen Campbell; Teacher / mentee	Career development mentoring; (Chartered Teacher)	Secondary	CT mentoring
Three questions for school leaders.	Max Bullough, Leah Crawford, Carolyn Hughan; External facilitators	Leadership support	Primary and secondary schools	Leadership through Narrative
Lesson chats @Mayfield	Paula Ayliffe; Deputy headteacher & then Headteacher	Collaborative CPD	Primary	Lesson Chats

Table 1. The working paper sample of collaborative practices



At the point of writing this working paper each selected paper has been summarised against key themes and the summaries produced have been verified each author. The practices across the nine examples have been compared and contrasted; looking for themes which emerged, and similarities and differences between them based on the features identified. This has allowed an ecosystemic lens to be applied to the findings as outlined in figure 1.

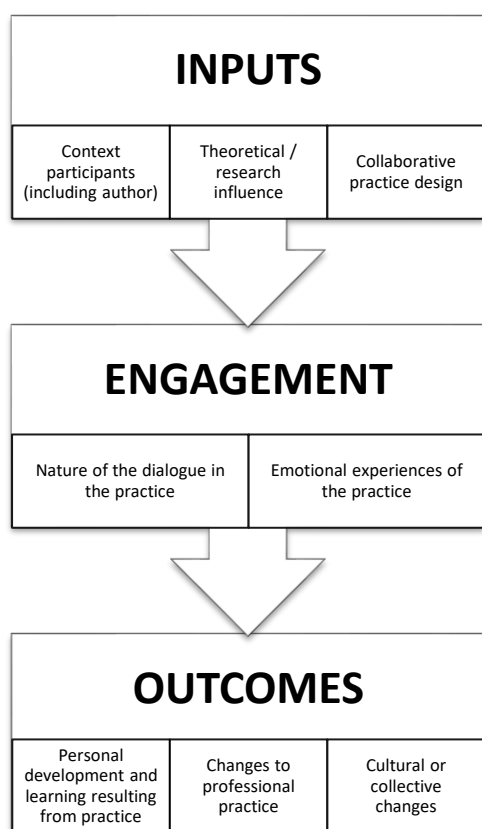


Figure 1. Ecosystemic approach to analysing the narratives of collaborative practices

Recognising and addressing limitations

The original working papers were not written to a template and so their style and structure vary. They were written voluntarily by the authors for inclusion in the publication highlighting the practices and themes that they were interested in. The papers were not submitted for examination or assessment. No substantial editing (other than ensuring clarity of writing) was conducted. No additional information has been added to the data set other than the working papers. As such, the working papers included in the sample are being viewed as authentic narratives of practice. While it must be acknowledged that using the working papers as a source of data means that these narratives have not been interrogated with wider evidence they do nevertheless offer a genuine chance to engage with stories of practice, and using them as cases from which lessons can be drawn is strengthened by the cross-case analysis. Where extracts from the papers are used in this paper they are all direct quotes and when they have quoted another participant in the collaborative practice is that is indicated.

Findings emerging from the narratives

Inputs and influences

When considering the inputs, it is interesting to consider who the participants are in the



collaborative practice and in what ways has the approach been developed with them in mind. It is also interesting to determine what is framing the practice, and whether existing constraints or tensions were resolved through the design of the approach.

In four cases (all primary schools) all members of teaching staff are involved with the collaborative practice and the school leaders are involved as facilitators, coaches or participants. In one case the collaborative practice involves a teacher and an external coach / mentor (the author used both terms) but their participation as such is part of a new professional initiative set up by the Chartered College of Teaching and allowing both participants to engage in wider professional networks. In the other four cases participation depends on an individual's professional role in their setting, for example Advanced Practitioners across FE colleges, members of a subject department in single FE college, Specialist Leaders in Education and subject leaders in project schools, or membership of leadership teams. There is evidence of how the scope, scale and design of the collaborative practices has been determined by the nature of expected participation.

Another influence is the theoretical framing of the collaborative practices. In all cases they are based on broad and generally accepted

theories of teacher learning, such as the value of reflection, but in some cases the facilitators draw on and cite specific practices with established design principles, including Lesson Study (Dudley, 2015), Thinking Environments (Kline, 2009), Discipline of Noticing (Mason, 2002). Others draw on and are informed by range of influences, including coaching (Lofthouse et al. 2010), practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) and appreciative enquiry (Reed, 2007) from which the collaborative practices have been designed. To some extent the choice of approach and the principles by which it has been put into practice are deliberate, not only because of the anticipated opportunities that will arise, but also as a means to moderate some of the likely tensions and difficulties.

Being engaged

In terms of the experience of engagement with the collaborative practice, the narratives give insight into the types and levels of participants' engagement and the roles that were taken. They also outline the nature of dialogue that existing during the collaborative practice and how the participants felt. In some cases, there is evidence of how this differs from other professional experiences. Three sub-themes emerged from the analysis. These are outlined with examples in Table 2.



Nature of dialogue sub-themes	Examples from working papers
A1. The content / focus of the discussion: e.g. related to aspects of teaching and learning, or drawing on research	<i>"I came away from the initial chat needing to research a few things and then I fed them back to the teacher and we ended up team teaching the lesson." (Lesson chats, quote from subject leader)</i> <i>'[my mentor's] knowledge of teaching practice is outstanding: she has seen ever so much, and shares this knowledge with care and support' (CTeach Mentoring)</i>
A2. The collaborative nature of the dialogue: e.g. developing conversation skills (such as listening, asking good questions, not interrupting), sharing experiences, building shared language, sense of ownerships, mutually beneficial	<i>'We found that it was important that people could speak at length without fear of being interrupted, judged, or receiving unsolicited advice. It transformed the way we listened to, and supported, each other as a department.'</i> (Discipline of Noticing) <i>'The process fundamentally develops skilled active listening habits, a shared language for talking and thinking collaboratively about pedagogy and a way to shift a range of deeply ingrained habits and behaviours which were holding some members of staff back in terms of developing their practice.'</i> (Lesson Study)
A3. The challenging aspect of the dialogue: probing, developing critical thinking, making links, enabling others to problem solve and making decisions, and this being sequenced over time.	<i>'identified possible changes to pedagogy and strategies used, in order to address these issues and participants were able to see how we were connecting all the 'things' we had to do, through a focus on learning and our learners'</i> (Learning Culture) <i>'Asking questions rather than providing solutions; Giving others space to come up with solutions rather than 'fixing'' (SSIF Project Coaching)</i>

Table 2. The nature of the dialogue in the collaborative practices

In addition to these characteristics of the dialogue developed during the collaborative practices the working paper narratives often shared how the participants felt during the practice itself, and this was often creating emotions that were not always felt in the workplace. These are represented in table 3.

Emotional engagement sub-themes	Examples from working papers
B1. Feeling willing to engage with the process; not experiencing it as a threat and not being afraid to challenge each other. This leads to participants feeling less defensive, admitting when help needed, and reframing perceived issues as positives and possibilities.	<i>'Staff were no longer afraid to challenge each other and were less defensive about their own practice and able to ask questions to clarify their understanding.'</i> (Lesson Study) <i>"Never before have I felt able to admit that I needed help understanding what a good geography lesson looked like and actually when I did ask and talked it through I realised that most of what I had been teaching had been quite good."</i> (participant quote, Lesson chats)
B2. Building positive relationships; feeling respected, experiencing kindness and support and gaining a heightened awareness of own and others' values	<i>'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.'</i> (Leadership through Narrative) <i>'Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, my coach is kind and has been kind to me. [...] feeling relaxed comes as a consequence'</i> (CTeach Mentoring)
B3. Experiencing positive morale; enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the collaborative practice	<i>'participants had retained a sense of intrigue: "I can't remember what we did, but I felt myself relax as soon as I walked back into this room."</i> (author and participant quote, Thinking Environment) <i>'We held optional meetings once a week, which were well attended, even by those who were not regularly making accounts.'</i> (Discipline of Noticing)

Table 3. The emotional dimension of participation in the collaborative practices

Learning outcomes

The papers offer narrative evidence of the outcomes of the collaborative experience. This emerges at different scales including the individual and the organisational and offer insights into both professional learning and the participants' development of practice resulting from engagement. There is a strong



sense of personal learning and development resulting from engaging in the collaborative practice, and this is illustrated in table 4.

Personal development and learning sub-themes	Examples from working papers
C1. Impacts on self-efficacy; changing how sees oneself, recognising impact of your work and gaining confidence. This leads to participants being keen to make changes and experiment in their work.	<i>'become more sensitive to habitual behaviours that may be more or less helpful, towards recognising and then making available other possibilities for acting.'</i> (Discipline of Noticing) <i>'Adaptive expertise increased as teachers recognised the impact they were having on learning, and how their learners were reacting to various learning situations. [...] They better understood the importance of relationships.'</i> (Learning Culture)
C2. Discussions promote new insights to support work. They are thought-provoking, change how participants see things and allow them to gain expertise. Through their ability to reflect they develop clarity and coherence in thinking.	<i>"Thinking environments revolutionised my perceptions of education."</i> (participant quote, Thinking Environment) <i>'Confidence to work through challenges - co-constructing next steps and empowering others. [...] Learning to adapt without compromising long-term goals Greater awareness and understanding of the role.'</i> (SSIF Project Coaching)

Table 4. The impacts of the collaborative practices on personal development and learning

These personal learning experiences impact on changes in professional decision making and action, whether this is in teaching and learning or leading and managing roles. Motivation and increased agency play a significant role in this and table 5 illustrates.

Impact on professional practice sub-themes	Examples from working papers
D1. Increased agency: a willingness to take action and responsibility. Sometimes this is linked potential future roles.	<i>"I have become more aware of the continuum between telling, and encouraging students to form their own opinions and explanations during this project, and have since experimented with moving around it as consciously as possible."</i> (participant quote, Discipline of Noticing) <i>'Chartered College currently plans to use teachers who have recently been awarded CTeach status as the coaches of future cohorts. Thus, my coach is not only teaching me how to improve and develop, but also how to coach in the future.'</i> (CTeach Mentoring)
D2. Increased relational agency: participants are now more proactive, e.g. seeking more support, or being more collaborative in wider professional life.	<i>'By giving teachers greater ownership of the improvement effort the senior leadership team are now seeing teachers display a much stronger commitment to learn from, with and on behalf of each other and their pupils.'</i> (Lesson Study) <i>"Coaching has helped me to collaborate with the Headteacher to keep the momentum of the project going so that staff and children continue to engage."</i> (participant quote, SSIF Project Coaching)
D3. An impact on teaching and learning through more nuanced understanding and adopting methods of approaching key tasks	<i>'The children enjoyed the time to explore new books, found themselves immersed in the stories, and used it as an opportunity to get dressed up and role play. During a school governor observation visit it was recognised that the children were talking about more about books, using wider vocabulary, and showing real enthusiasm for stories and reading.'</i> (Alternative staff meetings) <i>'[Teachers] became innovative. For our learners, attainment and achievement were raised and they saw teachers modelling themselves as learners.'</i> (Learning Culture)

Table 5. The impacts of the collaborative practices on professional decision making and action



A final clear outcome indicated in the working paper narratives is the impact on the collective culture of the settings in which the collaborative practices have been developed, which go beyond the specific practices and filter out into the school or college. These are illustrated in table 6.

Impact on collective culture sub-themes	Examples from working papers
E1. Ongoing collaboration and critical engagement; based on trust, respect and deeper relationships between staff. This results in more shared thinking collaboration over time.	<p><i>'But the energy it created was infectious, to the point that the whole workplace are setting up their own communities for everything from observation support meetings, to lesson planning and even a mud run community of practice.'</i> (participant quote, Thinking Environment)</p> <p><i>'When reviewing appraisal requests at the end of 2017-18, 'lesson chats' were requested by 82% of the teaching staff, not because they were identified as needing further support, but because they wanted it'. (Lesson Chats)</i></p> <p><i>'Lesson Study process provided a frame in which questioning, as both a pedagogic focus and an adult learning tool, helped to build collaborative relationships as the teachers became better listeners.'</i> (Lesson Study)</p>
E2. Links to school / college improvement. Teachers are generating more ideas, there is a change in hierarchy and an emergence of distributed leadership.	<p><i>'Teacher-leadership and dispersed/distributed leadership began to develop, as previous hierarchies were 'flattened' and everyone recognised each person had a role in how the schools developed.'</i> (Learning Culture)</p> <p><i>'They are constantly refreshing their thinking and practice and their decisions are rooted in the realities of our school, the learning opportunities and challenges they wanted to offer our pupils and their families and the ambitions they had for our school's future.'</i> (Alternative staff meetings)</p>

Table 6. The impacts of the collaborative practices on collective culture

Discussion

Threading throughout the ecosystem are constraints; some are systemic and not easily resolved, others were, at least in part, addressed through the design of the collaborative practice, and some of which become less problematic as the changes resulting from the collaborative practices evolved. When reviewing the narratives three recurring tensions emerged.

Firstly, there is an acknowledgement that schools and colleges and professionals working in them are often resistant to change. Some of the collaborative practices discussed in the working papers were developed to break down some of the norms of practice and existing hierarchies. Simple practical solutions were sought to this in the alternative staff meetings example tendencies for staff to be pre-occupied with other school-based tasks rather than fully attending the meetings were reduced by holding them off site. (Jackson, 2017). More complex problems emerge when some past and exiting practices had eroded trust, and this needed to be re-gained to make progress. This is illustrated in the Learning Cultures paper, 'When [teachers] have been exposed to those types of cultures, their ability to think and act like individual professional practitioners, is taken away from them, as they get used to being told what to do, when to do it and what resources to use



to deliver it! They lose the ability to think creatively, to take risks and to be professionally curious.’ (Gilchrist, 2017, p.34)

Fortunately, the narratives demonstrate that trust can be re-established from a deficit or can be further enhanced through the experience of collaboration. This is perhaps most explicitly designed into the practice in the ‘Thinking Environment’. ‘Thinking environments can be sabotaged but they can’t be subverted: the sabotage is at least out in the open. Being upfront about this has been helpful for educators who are struggling with implementing radical, equalising new practices into organisations built on hierarchies of power.’ (Mycroft, 2019, p. 107)

The subthemes and examples in tables 2 and 5 above suggest that a growth of trust during and resulting from collaborative practices is common.

Secondly, collaborative practices are difficult to establish and sustain. They take time to put into operation, they require sustained effort, and appropriate resourcing. School and college leaders are required to make strategic and operational decisions to support them, by reallocating resources or redirecting time. In the Lesson Chats example the headteacher states that ‘We have invested in these days because we know that ‘lesson chats’ are a

very effective way of putting CPD into practice.’ (Ayliffe, 2019, p. 89). The leadership team adopting Lesson Study are grappling with the dilemma of how to resource it at a time of budgetary cuts and balancing the cost with its potential for capacity building for sustained impact, ‘In a time of tightening budgets will an external role of ‘expert other’ be affordable? If we prioritise it we need to consider how the time and effort afforded to it can be used to ensure that there is a sustainable future and builds on the growing expertise of teachers to support future Lesson Study, in our school or beyond.’ (Lofthouse and King, 2017. p. 18)

The narratives suggest that making these collaborative practices work requires different leadership approaches to those often adopted in schools and colleges. They cannot be micro-managed but do need sustained support. This can be an understandable challenge for school leaders, but it also presents a challenge to participants. To work effectively the collaborative practices require participants themselves to accept the associated challenge, and not only in terms of workload. They also need to engage emotionally and cognitively and the demands of this can be hard in already over-crowded professional lives. This is illustrated in the account of the Discipline of Noticing, ‘Whilst all six teachers



in the department considered The Discipline of Noticing to be a good idea, only three of us managed to systematically record accounts over a period of time. Setting oneself to notice and systematically record events requires commitment.’ (Brown, 2017, p.13.) However, the caveat is that the evidence from the selected examples demonstrates that when collaborative practices work well the participants take ownership, and that leads onto a way of addressing this tension. Workload will remain an issue, but it is possible to at least feel positive that the effort is enjoyable, productive and creates genuine learning opportunities.

Resolving these tensions provides genuine opportunities for collaborative practices to make a difference to the working lives of teachers and leaders in schools and colleges, and at the time of writing there are many reasons why we might need to focus attention on this. Teacher wellbeing and teacher retention are becoming problems which the system needs to address through policy decisions and changes to practice. These narratives were not collected with this in mind, but they do offer some insights into factors that might positively impact on teachers’ capacity to sustain their work in the profession over time. Working collaboratively offers them opportunities to meet some of

the challenges of the job head on, but in an environment where the challenges are shared and there less anxiety is experienced, and they can play a part in developing new approaches suited to the needs of their pupils, students and colleagues. As such it is likely that these teachers gain experience increased teacher collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). This may in be part the result of the chances for co-construction, (Lofthouse et al. 2010) as a consequence of the new dialogic processes which themselves rely on trust (Whitmore 2002, and Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran 2010). In addition, some narratives indicate the existence of the first tenet of collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves and O’Connor, 2018), that of ‘collective autonomy’ through which educators are more independent of top-down administrators and school leaders but have less independence from each other. At a time when some schools are now being characterized as toxic for employees (Woodley and Morrison, 2018), these narratives do offer hope that this is not inevitable (despite current pressures of accountability), and indeed demonstrate the value and impact of appropriately supported and intelligently designed workplace learning practices.



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CollectivEd Thinking Out Loud

An interview with Melanie Chambers

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

My name is Melanie Chambers and I work as a Secondary Deputy Head in a at The British School of Brussels, but with a Whole School responsibility for Professional Learning. My teaching background is in Modern Foreign Languages, and currently I teach Spanish at KS3 and French at Post 16. Previous to this role, I have held Pastoral and Departmental Leadership positions in schools in Brussels, Tenerife and the North West of England. Over the last two years, we have worked to build and develop our Professional Learning Community at my current school, and I have had a key role in the leadership of Professional Learning across the whole school for staff in all roles and responsibilities.

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 still reflect on my NQT years twenty years ago. Classroom Management was an important skill to learn; some classes were large, with over 40 students in a KS3 English group I taught, and the perceived relevance of speaking French and Spanish varied widely amongst the students. A lot of support was given from the LEA. As newly qualified teachers from across Sefton Council we met regularly, off timetable, within our subject specialisms to collaboratively plan, review our

teaching and reflect on our practice together. We shared successes and challenges with a supportive, caring and passionate subject-specialist mentor. It was during this time that I learnt the importance of being listened to and still believe in this collegial approach to learning, where the power of a group is always more than the sum of its parts.

When you work with colleagues or other professionals to support their development what are the key attributes that you bring with you, and what difference do these qualities make?

I find listening so important! Spending time with colleagues, listening to what they say, giving time to reflect, not having to fill the pauses, all builds trust. A lot of the time a staff member may come to talk about a 'problem' but will often solve it themselves just talking it through. Other times they come with ideas or initiatives for something they want to run; listening and asking the right questions often allows them to create a vision for how this will work themselves. Generally, I find this is the best outcome, as when staff have crafted the idea themselves they own it, take responsibility for it and are really enthused to lead.

Sometimes it's not always straight forward, and it will take several meetings before a solution or plan comes to light. This may be frustrating for staff who want a quick answer, and are keen to start something. Generally, however, they are happy with the end-result



when they have taken the extra time to reflect. Making this reflection process as supportive as possible is vital. In these cases, it's sometimes about identifying any possible barriers and showing support by trying to remove them. At other times, it's about encouragement and permission, and often it's about thinking a little wider than the issue first presented as, making the connections and joining the dots from other conversations to build a support network, wider than just the initial staff involved.

How do you turn educational challenges into learning opportunities?

Inviting staff and students who are interested in working on an initiative to come together to create a common goal is really exciting, rewarding and effective! In these situations, identifying why, what and how you need to work is crucial. Careful listening, meaningful questioning, critical feedback and trusted distributed leadership are important to this way of working. The involvement of students to help staff reflect and co-create initiatives has a lot of potential.

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

In terms of educational leadership, working with a range of school leaders up to this point in my career has really helped me to see how different styles work in different contexts. The value of listening, supporting staff to lead on their own initiatives and assist them if things don't go to plan is something I consider to be vital, if you value innovation and aspire

to staff working in an intrinsically motivated and energised way.

Additionally, the support that can be given from a trusted colleague or mentor is immense. I have been fortunate that the school I currently work at encourages this and I had the privilege of working with Tom Whittingham, who gave me the opportunity to think aloud and critically reflect on strategic plans with faith in the person listening to me. This has also afforded me time and space to think, and has been a rich professional learning opportunity for me.

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

Is there a tribe that likes to listen to the tribes and try to come to their own conclusions? If so, that would be mine!

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

I don't think it is as much the case with Primary education, but sometimes in Secondary, you find teachers who are so passionate about their subject and teaching their subject, that the balance between subject knowledge and general care for child development and learning is out of balance. It may sound obvious, but it's really important that if you are going to teach children of any age, that you enjoy being with children and helping them to learn!



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 key that the environment in which staff work supports this.

Collaboration needs to be underpinned by the school leadership to help all staff (not just teachers) to review their practice and consider new possibilities. For this to work effectively they need to be trusted to make decisions, encouraged to think creatively and supported to take some risks.

It's important to realise that we all respond to collaborating differently, and some staff may need more support and guidance, especially if they have been used to a more hierarchical, directed leadership style. Do they need a facilitator who can help them to identify what they are collaborating on or, skills-wise, do they need someone they can turn to for support in terms of working effectively as a group?

It's vital that collaboration is given the resources it needs. A dedicated chunk of time and a space away from other job distractions demonstrates that this is not just time to chat, or something that can be re-arranged dependent on the pressures of the day, formalising it can help to show how much it is valued.

If you could turn back the clock and bring back a past educational practice or policy what would it be and why?

On one of my first teaching practices, at a Secondary School in Lancashire, all of the language classrooms had been built in a hexagonal block with partition walls between each room that could be removed to open up the classrooms into one big learning space. I remember asking during my placement if they ever did open up the divides, but the teacher just laughed and explained that the school had been built in the 70s and this was an idea they thought would work back then. I would like to pursue how we can have more flexible teaching spaces in the school I currently teach at; the possibilities it would bring for staff and student collaboration could be very beneficial to everyone's learning

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

There are two pieces that come to mind and resonate with my leadership values.

One was "You don't have to have all the answers!", which was rightly offered by a close and trusted adviser, after observing me trying to navigate through a tricky conversation.

The second was during my MEd course. One of the studies we looked at quoted: "...to be a more effective leader, you must be yourself – more-with skill"² and the course leader re-phrased it simply as: "Be yourself - but with more skill". In earlier days of my career I found it hard "to be myself", as other leaders around me had such different ways of working. I assumed their way of leading was better, as they had more experience than I did

² Goffee, R. & Jones, G. (2015) *Why Should Anyone Be Led By You? What it takes to be*

an authentic leader. Harvard Business Review. Boston Massachusetts. p17



at that point in my career. I have now realised how important it is to be yourself (with more skill!) if you are to lead with authenticity and conviction.

I would like to dedicate this piece to Tom Whittingham, trusted friend and facilitator who worked with us at BSB from January 2017 to February 2019 when he sadly passed away in March this year. He encouraged us to push the boundaries of 'what might be' and to work with compassion to develop ourselves, others and the organisation in our emerging, evolving and expanding Professional Learning Community.



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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.

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